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BLACK WIDOW®

BEWARE THE BLACK WIDOW

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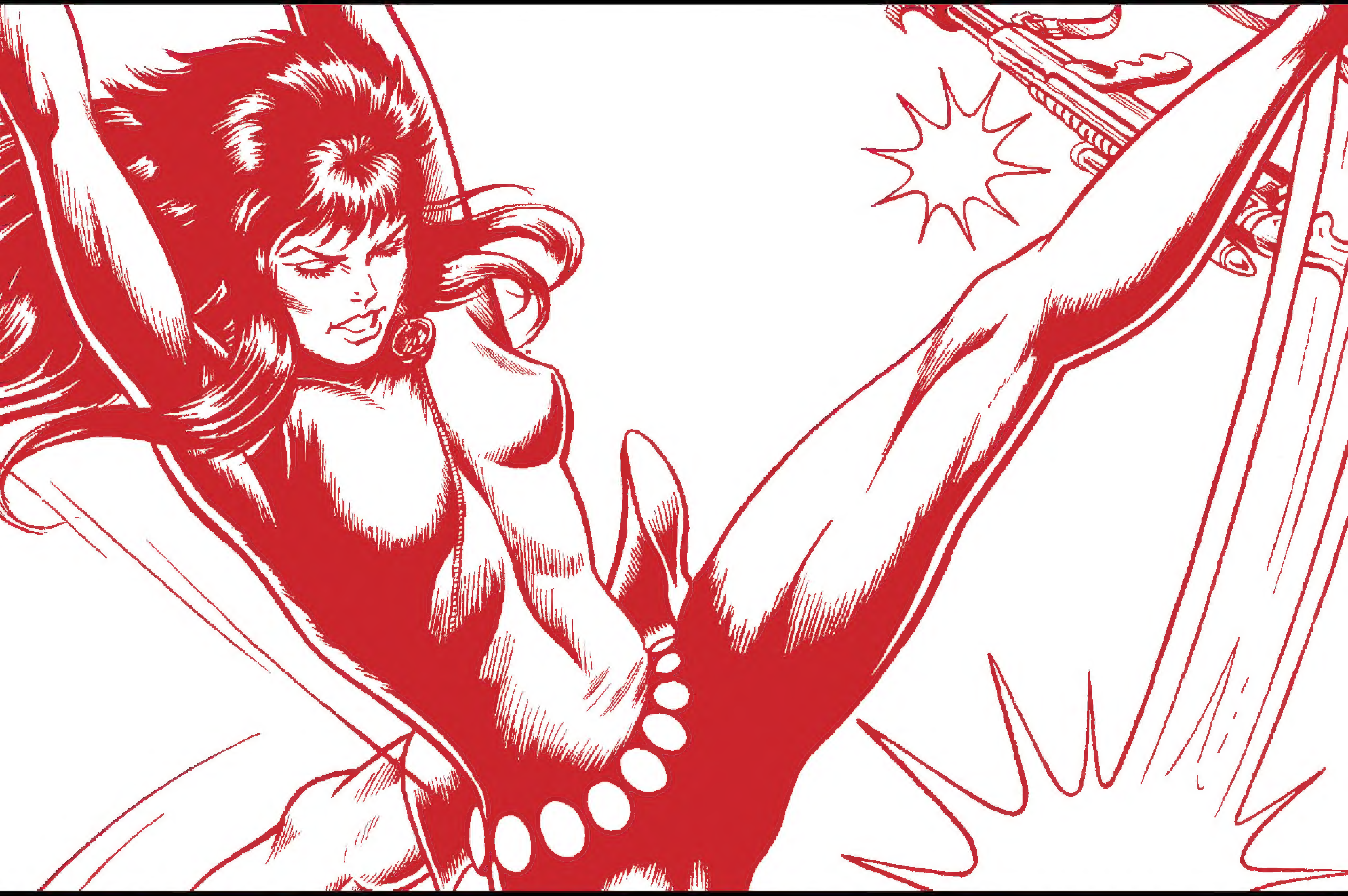

BLACK WIDOW

BEWARE THE BLACK WIDOW

VOLUME 1

1964-1971

TALES OF SUSPENSE #52-53, #57, #60 & #64, AVENGERS #29-30, #36-37 & #43-44,
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #86, AMAZING ADVENTURES #1-8, DAREDEVIL #81
AND MATERIAL FROM AVENGERS #16, #32-33, #38-39, #41-42, #45-47, #57, #63-64 & #76

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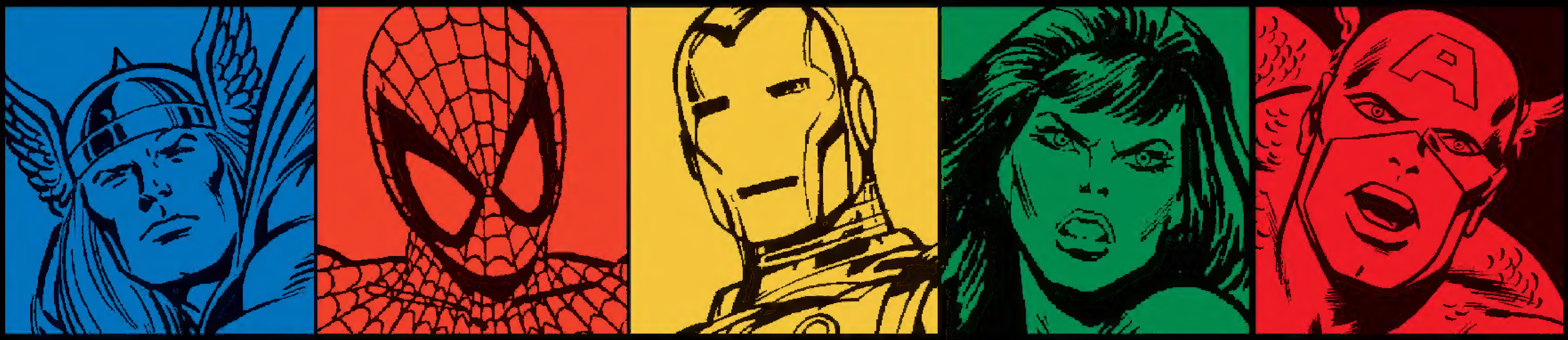

BLACK WIDOW

BEWARE THE BLACK WIDOW

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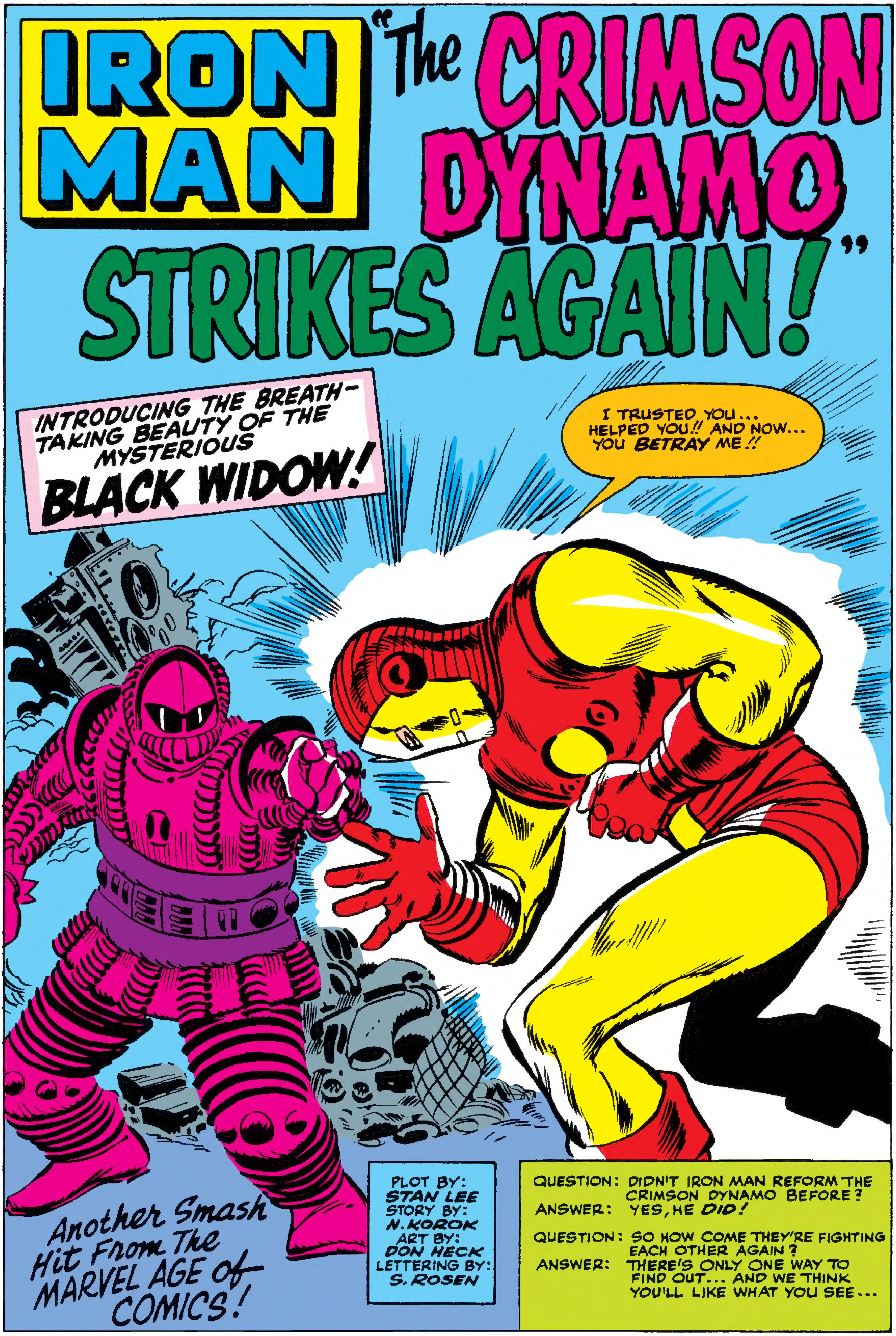
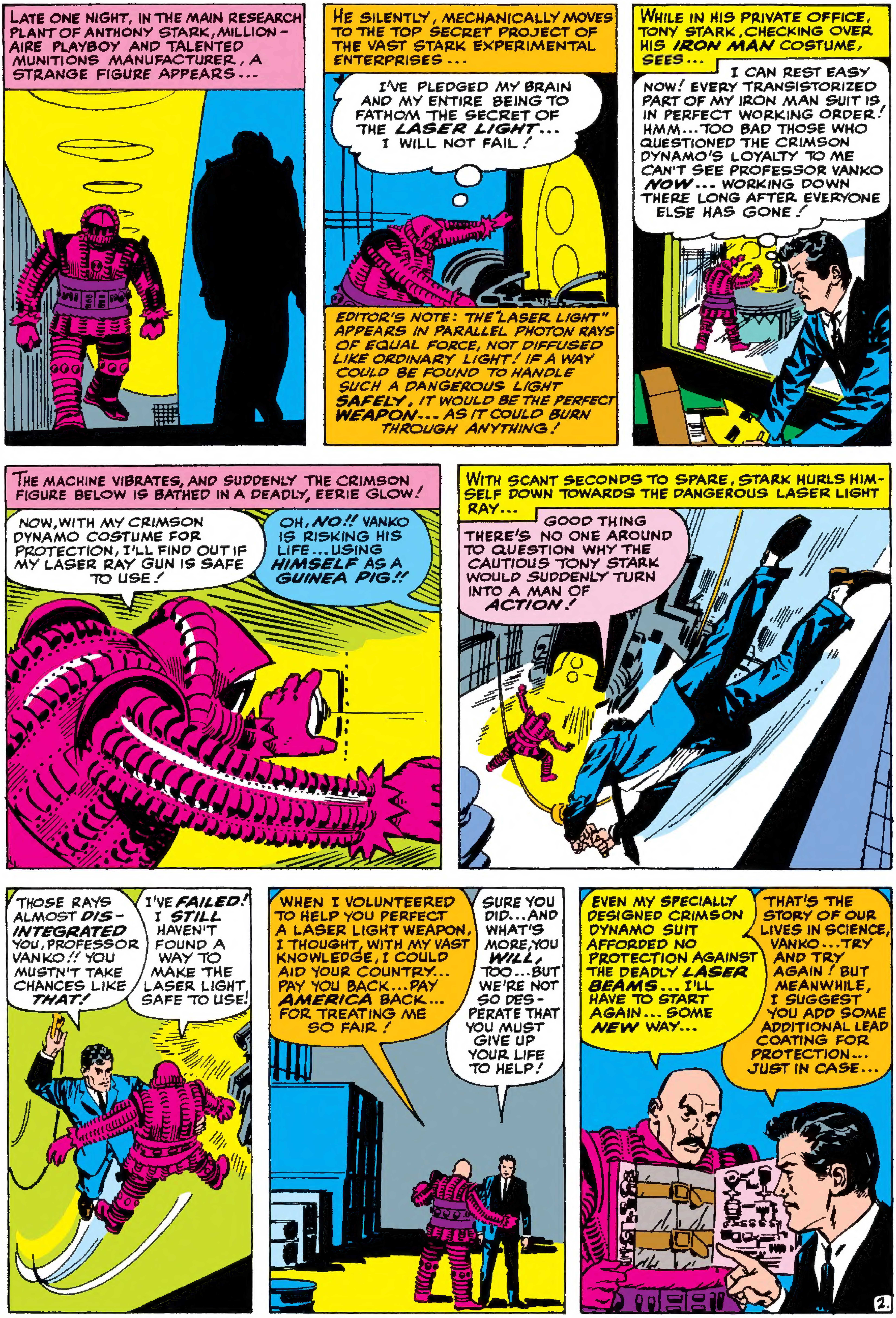
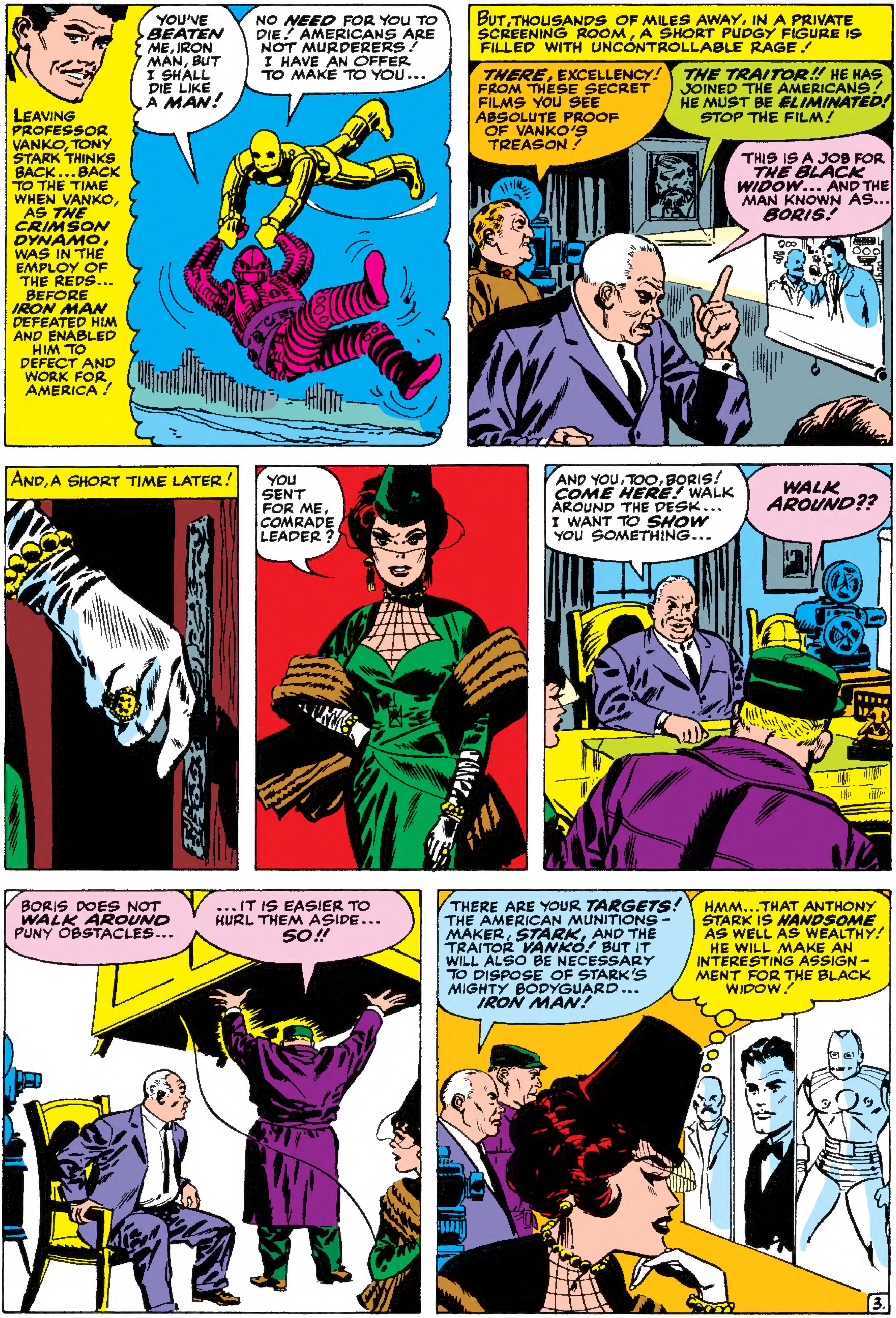
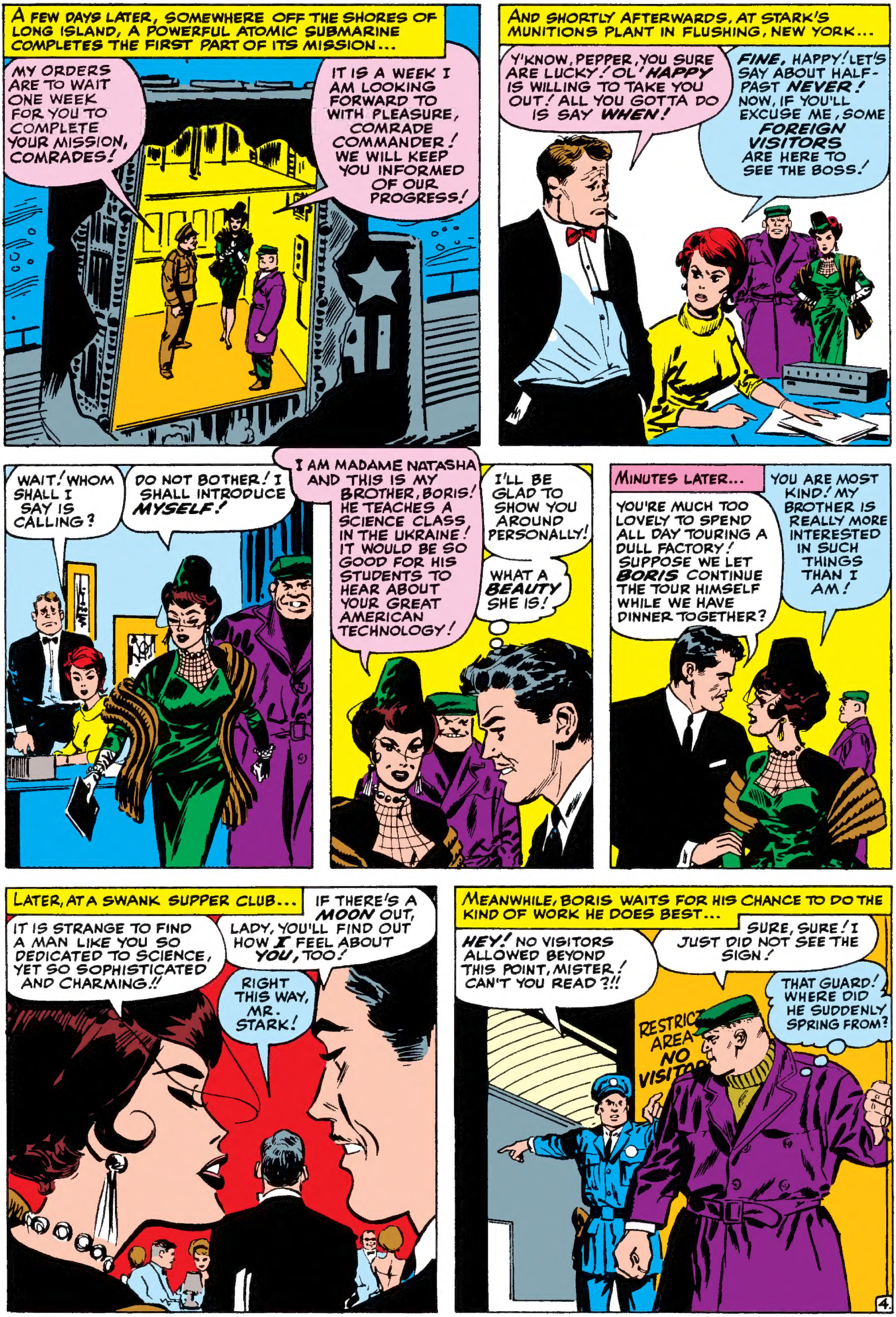
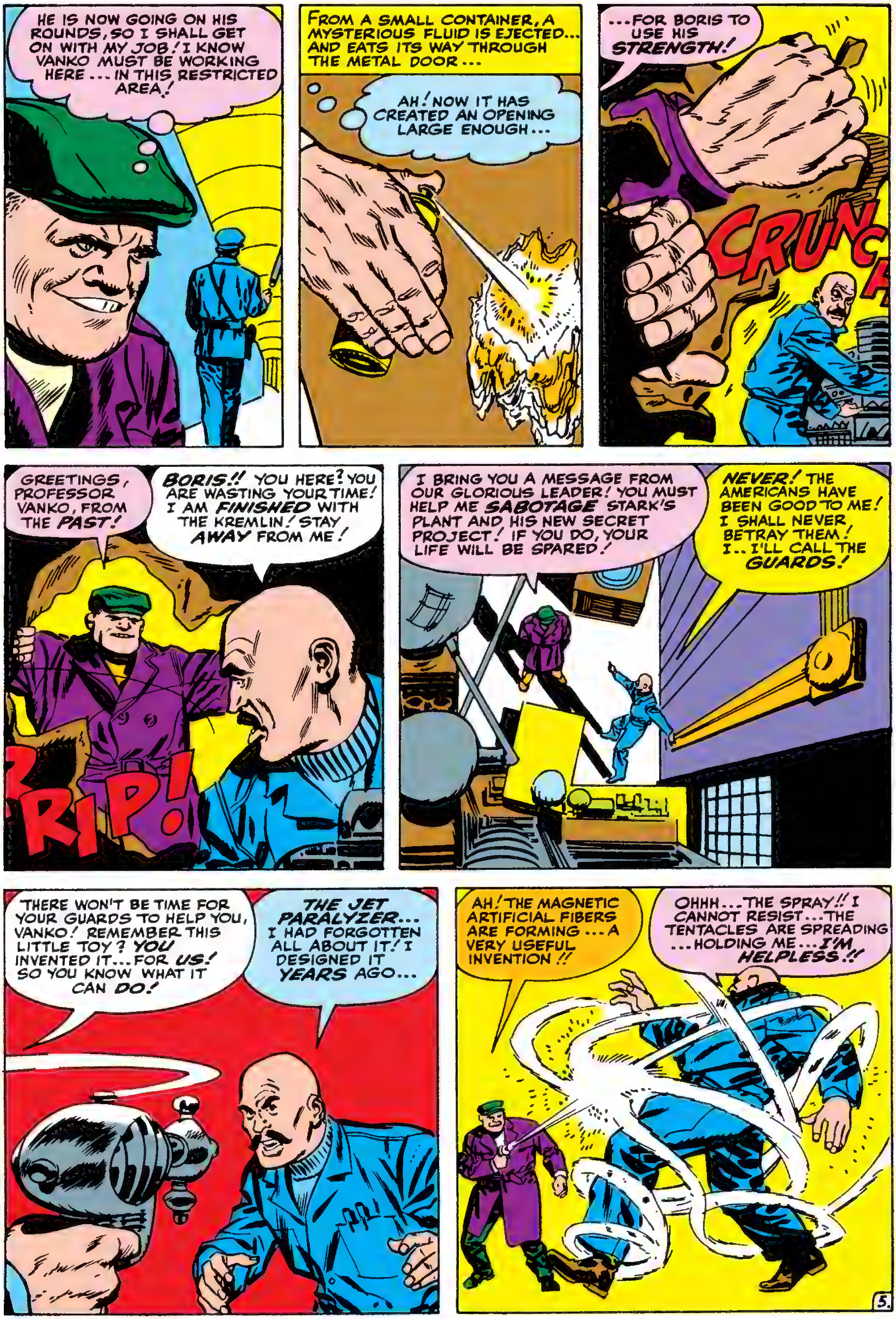
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TALES OF
IND.
SUSPENSE
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
52 APR.
"the CRIMSON DYNAMO STRIKES AGAIN!"
AND NONE, BUT
IRON MAN
CAN HOPE TO STOP HIM!
INTRODUCING: THE GORGEOUS NEW MENACE OF... THE BLACK WIDOW!

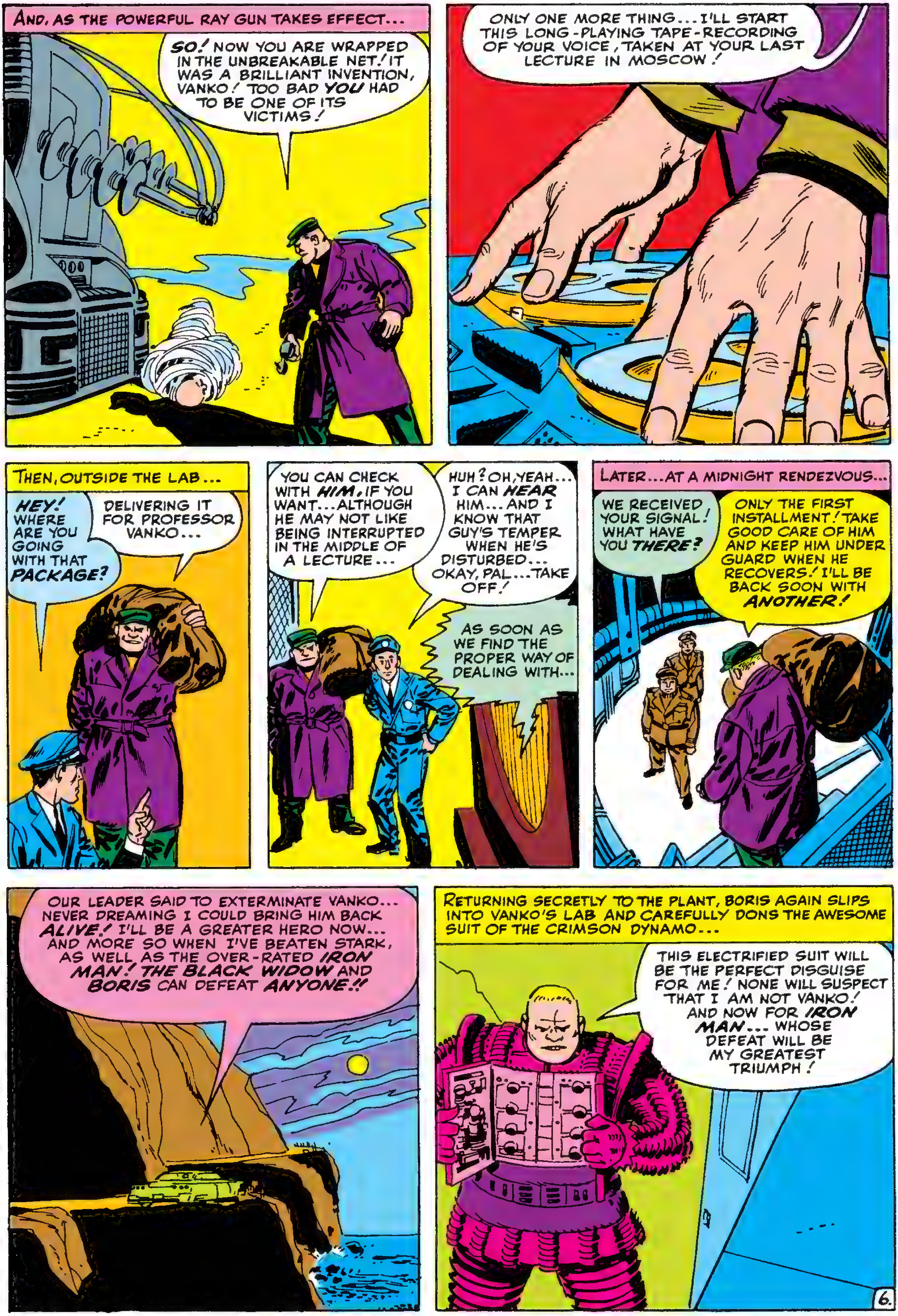

IRON MAN
"The CRIMSON DYNAMO STRIKES AGAIN!"
INTRODUCING THE BREATH-TAKING BEAUTY OF THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK WIDOW!
I TRUSTED YOU... HELPED YOU!! AND NOW... YOU BETRAY ME!!
Another Smash Hit From The MARVEL AGE of COMICS!
PLOT BY: STAN LEE STORY BY: N. KOROK ART BY: DON HECK LETTERING BY: S. ROSEN
QUESTION: DIDN'T IRON MAN REFORM THE CRIMSON DYNAMO BEFORE?
ANSWER: YES, HE DID!
QUESTION: SO HOW COME THEY'RE FIGHTING EACH OTHER AGAIN?
ANSWER: THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT... AND WE THINK YOU'LL LIKE WHAT YOU SEE...

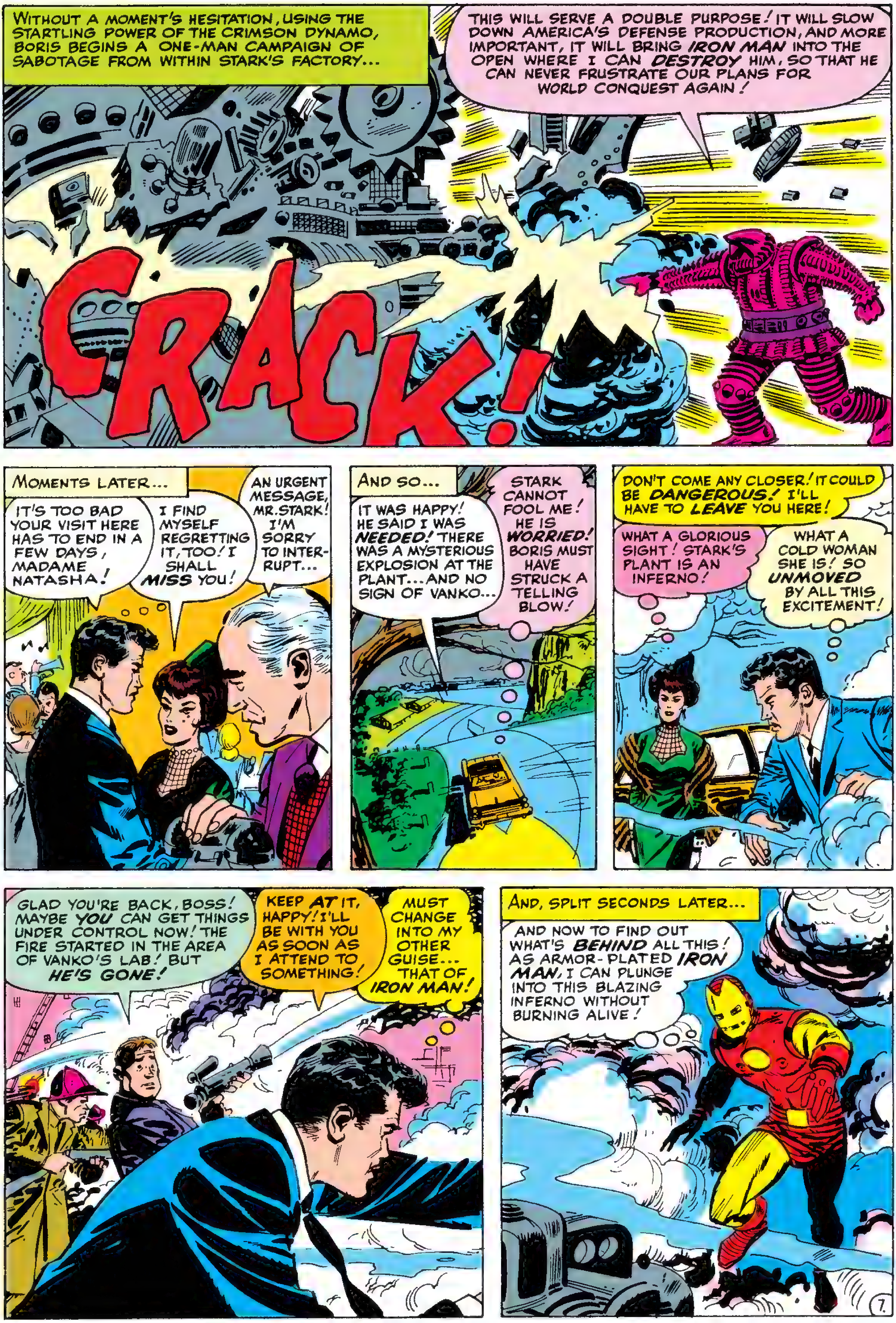

LATE ONE NIGHT, IN THE MAIN RESEARCH PLANT OF ANTHONY STARK, MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY AND TALENTED MUNITIONS MANUFACTURER, A STRANGE FIGURE APPEARS...
HE SILENTLY, MECHANICALLY MOVES TO THE TOP SECRET PROJECT OF THE VAST STARK EXPERIMENTAL ENTERPRISES...
I'VE PLEDGED MY BRAIN AND MY ENTIRE BEING TO FATHOM THE SECRET OF THE **LASER LIGHT**... I WILL NOT FAIL!
*EDITOR'S NOTE: THE "LASER LIGHT" APPEARS IN PARALLEL PHOTON RAYS OF EQUAL FORCE, NOT DIFFUSED LIKE ORDINARY LIGHT! IF A WAY COULD BE FOUND TO HANDLE SUCH A DANGEROUS LIGHT **SAFELY**, IT WOULD BE THE PERFECT **WEAPON**... AS IT COULD BURN THROUGH ANYTHING!*
WHILE IN HIS PRIVATE OFFICE, TONY STARK, CHECKING OVER HIS ***IRON MAN*** COSTUME, SEES...
I CAN REST EASY NOW! EVERY TRANSISTORIZED PART OF MY IRON MAN SUIT IS IN PERFECT WORKING ORDER! HMM... TOO BAD THOSE WHO QUESTIONED THE CRIMSON DYNAMO'S LOYALTY TO ME CAN'T SEE PROFESSOR VANKO ***NOW***... WORKING DOWN THERE LONG AFTER EVERYONE ELSE HAS GONE!
THE MACHINE VIBRATES, AND SUDDENLY THE CRIMSON FIGURE BELOW IS BATHED IN A DEADLY, EERIE GLOW!
NOW, WITH MY CRIMSON DYNAMO COSTUME FOR PROTECTION, I'LL FIND OUT IF MY LASER RAY GUN IS SAFE TO USE!
OH, ***NO!!*** VANKO IS RISKING HIS LIFE... USING ***HIMSELF*** AS A ***GUINEA PIG!!***
WITH SCANT SECONDS TO SPARE, STARK HURLS HIMSELF DOWN TOWARDS THE DANGEROUS LASER LIGHT RAY...
GOOD THING THERE'S NO ONE AROUND TO QUESTION WHY THE CAUTIOUS TONY STARK WOULD SUDDENLY TURN INTO A MAN OF ***ACTION!***
THOSE RAYS ALMOST ***DISINTEGRATED*** YOU, PROFESSOR VANKO!! YOU MUSTN'T TAKE CHANCES LIKE ***THAT!***
I'VE ***FAILED!*** I ***STILL*** HAVEN'T FOUND A WAY TO MAKE THE LASER LIGHT SAFE TO USE!
WHEN I VOLUNTEERED TO HELP YOU PERFECT A LASER LIGHT WEAPON, I THOUGHT, WITH MY VAST KNOWLEDGE, I COULD AID YOUR COUNTRY... PAY YOU BACK... PAY ***AMERICA*** BACK... FOR TREATING ME SO FAIR!
SURE YOU DID... AND WHAT'S MORE, YOU ***WILL***, TOO... BUT WE'RE NOT SO DESPERATE THAT YOU MUST GIVE UP YOUR LIFE TO HELP!
EVEN MY SPECIALLY DESIGNED CRIMSON DYNAMO SUIT AFFORDED NO PROTECTION AGAINST THE DEADLY ***LASER BEAMS***... I'LL HAVE TO START AGAIN... SOME ***NEW*** WAY...
THAT'S THE STORY OF OUR LIVES IN SCIENCE, VANKO... TRY AND TRY AGAIN! BUT MEANWHILE, I SUGGEST YOU ADD SOME ADDITIONAL LEAD COATING FOR PROTECTION... JUST IN CASE...

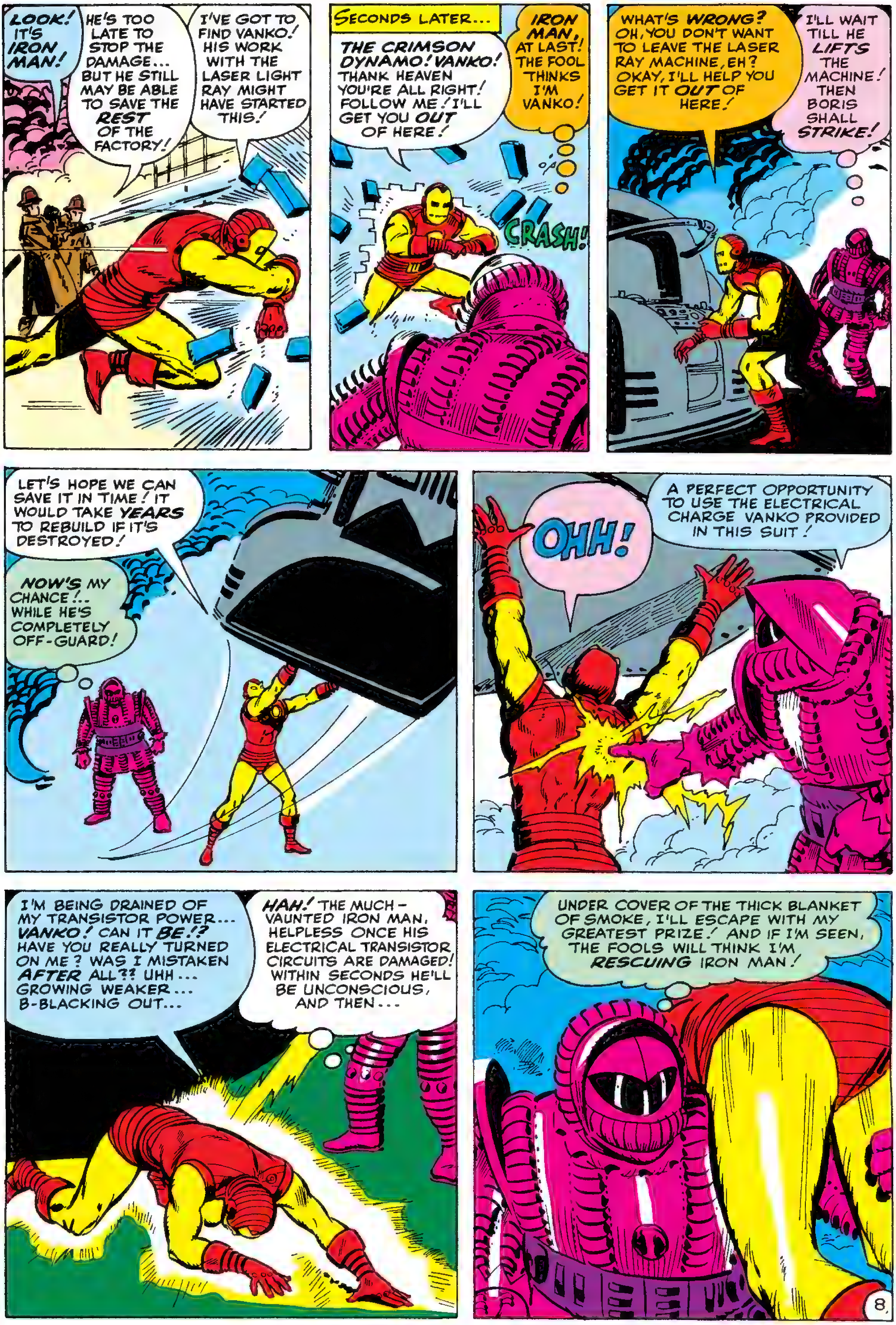

LEAVING PROFESSOR VANKO, TONY STARK THINKS BACK... BACK TO THE TIME WHEN VANKO, AS *THE CRIMSON DYNAMO*, WAS IN THE EMPLOY OF THE REDS... BEFORE *IRON MAN* DEFEATED HIM AND ENABLED HIM TO DEFECT AND WORK FOR AMERICA!
YOU'VE *BEATEN* ME, IRON MAN, BUT I SHALL DIE LIKE A *MAN*!
NO *NEED* FOR YOU TO DIE! AMERICANS ARE NOT MURDERERS! I HAVE AN OFFER TO MAKE TO YOU...
BUT, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY, IN A PRIVATE SCREENING ROOM, A SHORT PUDGY FIGURE IS FILLED WITH UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE!
THERE, EXCELLENCY! FROM THESE SECRET FILMS YOU SEE ABSOLUTE PROOF OF VANKO'S TREASON!
THE TRAITOR!! HE HAS JOINED THE AMERICANS! HE MUST BE *ELIMINATED!* STOP THE FILM!
THIS IS A JOB FOR *THE BLACK WIDOW*... AND THE MAN KNOWN AS... *BORIS!*
AND, A SHORT TIME LATER!
YOU SENT FOR ME, COMRADE LEADER?
AND YOU, TOO, BORIS! *COME HERE!* WALK AROUND THE DESK... I WANT TO *SHOW* YOU SOMETHING...
WALK AROUND??
BORIS DOES NOT *WALK AROUND* PUNY OBSTACLES...
...IT IS EASIER TO HURL THEM ASIDE... *SO!!*
THERE ARE YOUR *TARGETS!* THE AMERICAN MUNITIONS-MAKER, *STARK*, AND THE TRAITOR *VANKO!* BUT IT WILL ALSO BE NECESSARY TO DISPOSE OF STARK'S MIGHTY BODYGUARD... *IRON MAN!*
HMM... THAT ANTHONY STARK IS *HANDSOME* AS WELL AS WEALTHY! HE WILL MAKE AN INTERESTING ASSIGNMENT FOR THE BLACK WIDOW!

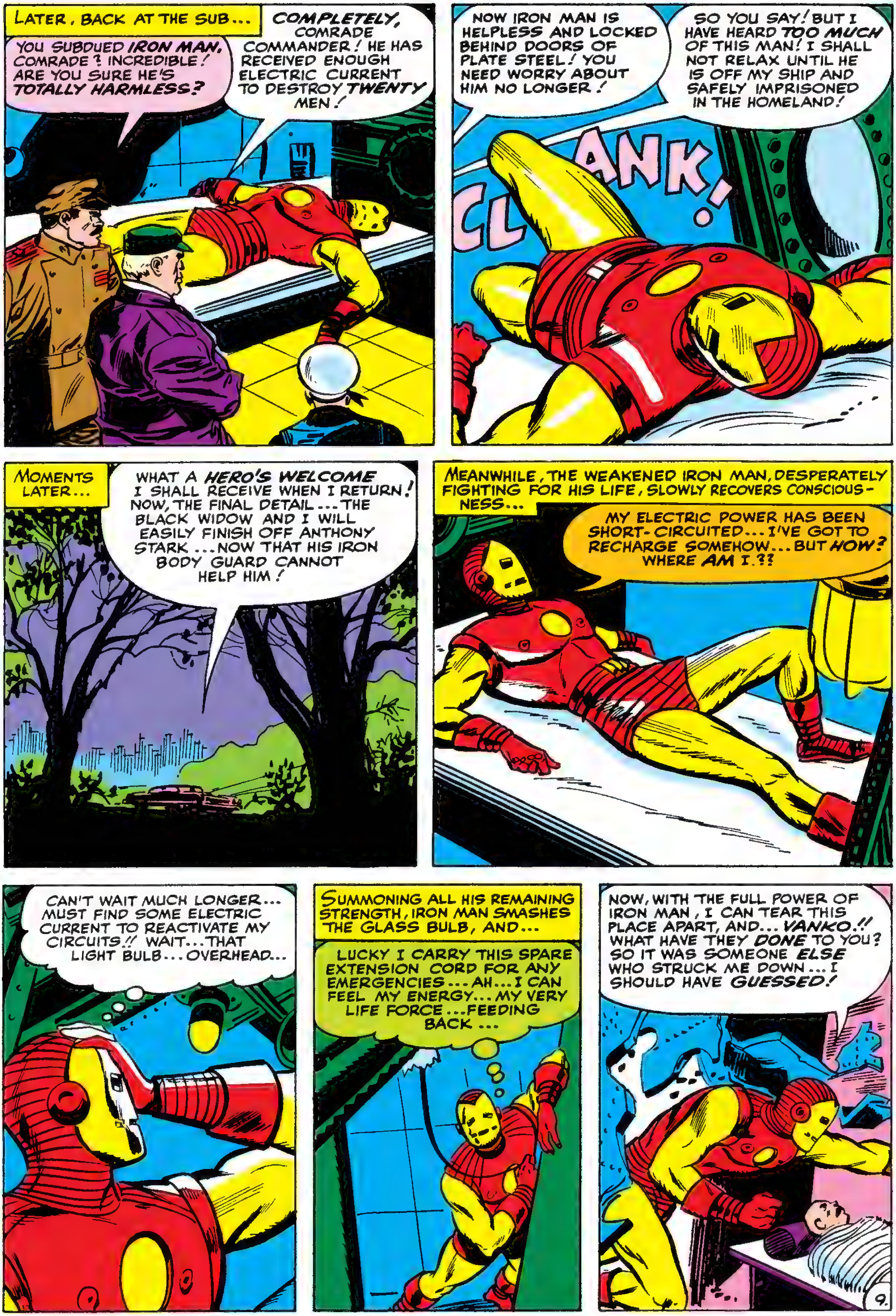

A FEW DAYS LATER, SOMEWHERE OFF THE SHORES OF LONG ISLAND, A POWERFUL ATOMIC SUBMARINE COMPLETES THE FIRST PART OF ITS MISSION...
MY ORDERS ARE TO WAIT ONE WEEK FOR YOU TO COMPLETE YOUR MISSION, COMRADES!
IT IS A WEEK I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO WITH PLEASURE, COMRADE COMMANDER! WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF OUR PROGRESS!
AND SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, AT STARK'S MUNITIONS PLANT IN FLUSHING, NEW YORK...
Y'KNOW, PEPPER, YOU SURE ARE LUCKY! OL' HAPPY IS WILLING TO TAKE YOU OUT! ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS SAY WHEN!
FINE, HAPPY! LET'S SAY ABOUT HALF-PAST NEVER! NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, SOME FOREIGN VISITORS ARE HERE TO SEE THE BOSS!
WAIT! WHOM SHALL I SAY IS CALLING?
DO NOT BOTHER! I SHALL INTRODUCE MYSELF!
I AM MADAME NATASHA AND THIS IS MY BROTHER, BORIS! HE TEACHES A SCIENCE CLASS IN THE UKRAINE! IT WOULD BE SO GOOD FOR HIS STUDENTS TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR GREAT AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY!
I'LL BE GLAD TO SHOW YOU AROUND PERSONALLY!
WHAT A BEAUTY SHE IS!
MINUTES LATER...
YOU'RE MUCH TOO LOVELY TO SPEND ALL DAY TOURING A DULL FACTORY! SUPPOSE WE LET BORIS CONTINUE THE TOUR HIMSELF WHILE WE HAVE DINNER TOGETHER?
YOU ARE MOST KIND! MY BROTHER IS REALLY MORE INTERESTED IN SUCH THINGS THAN I AM!
LATER, AT A SWANK SUPPER CLUB...
IT IS STRANGE TO FIND A MAN LIKE YOU SO DEDICATED TO SCIENCE, YET SO SOPHISTICATED AND CHARMING!!
IF THERE'S A MOON OUT, LADY, YOU'LL FIND OUT HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU, TOO!
RIGHT THIS WAY, MR. STARK!
MEANWHILE, BORIS WAITS FOR HIS CHANCE TO DO THE KIND OF WORK HE DOES BEST...
HEY! NO VISITORS ALLOWED BEYOND THIS POINT, MISTER! CAN'T YOU READ?!!
SURE, SURE! I JUST DID NOT SEE THE SIGN!
THAT GUARD! WHERE DID HE SUDDENLY SPRING FROM?
RESTRIC AREA NO VISITO

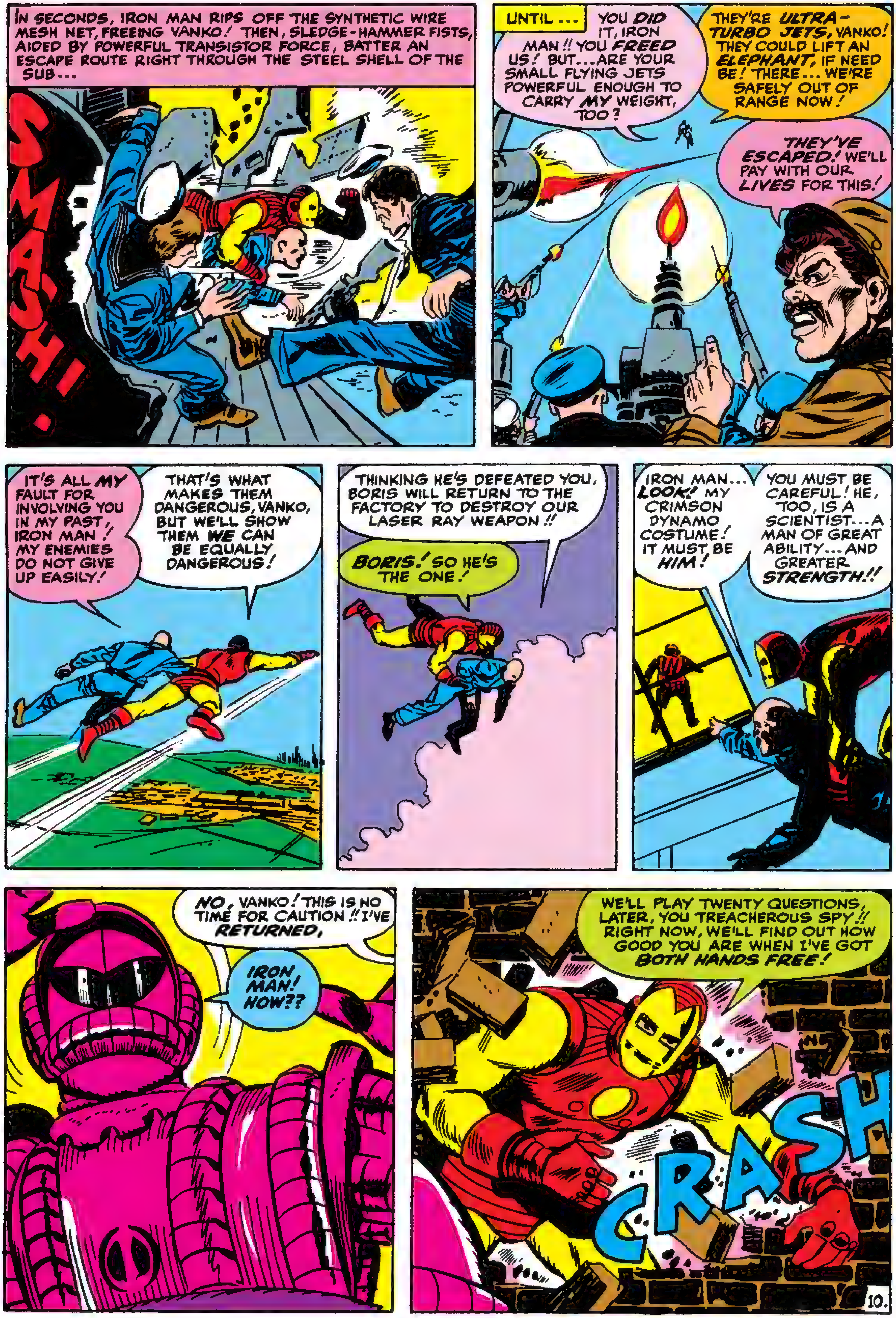

HE IS NOW GOING ON HIS ROUNDS, SO I SHALL GET ON WITH MY JOB! I KNOW VANKO MUST BE WORKING HERE... IN THIS RESTRICTED AREA!
FROM A SMALL CONTAINER, A MYSTERIOUS FLUID IS EJECTED... AND EATS ITS WAY THROUGH THE METAL DOOR...
AH! NOW IT HAS CREATED AN OPENING LARGE ENOUGH...
...FOR BORIS TO USE HIS STRENGTH!
CRUNCH
GREETINGS, PROFESSOR VANKO, FROM THE PAST!
BORIS!! YOU HERE? YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME! I AM FINISHED WITH THE KREMLIN! STAY AWAY FROM ME!
RRIP!
I BRING YOU A MESSAGE FROM OUR GLORIOUS LEADER! YOU MUST HELP ME SABOTAGE STARK'S PLANT AND HIS NEW SECRET PROJECT! IF YOU DO, YOUR LIFE WILL BE SPARED!
NEVER! THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN GOOD TO ME! I SHALL NEVER BETRAY THEM! I.. I'LL CALL THE GUARDS!
THERE WON'T BE TIME FOR YOUR GUARDS TO HELP YOU, VANKO! REMEMBER THIS LITTLE TOY? YOU INVENTED IT... FOR US! SO YOU KNOW WHAT IT CAN DO!
THE JET PARALYZER... I HAD FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT! I DESIGNED IT YEARS AGO...
AH! THE MAGNETIC ARTIFICIAL FIBERS ARE FORMING... A VERY USEFUL INVENTION!!
OHHH... THE SPRAY!! I CANNOT RESIST... THE TENTACLES ARE SPREADING ...HOLDING ME... I'M HELPLESS!!

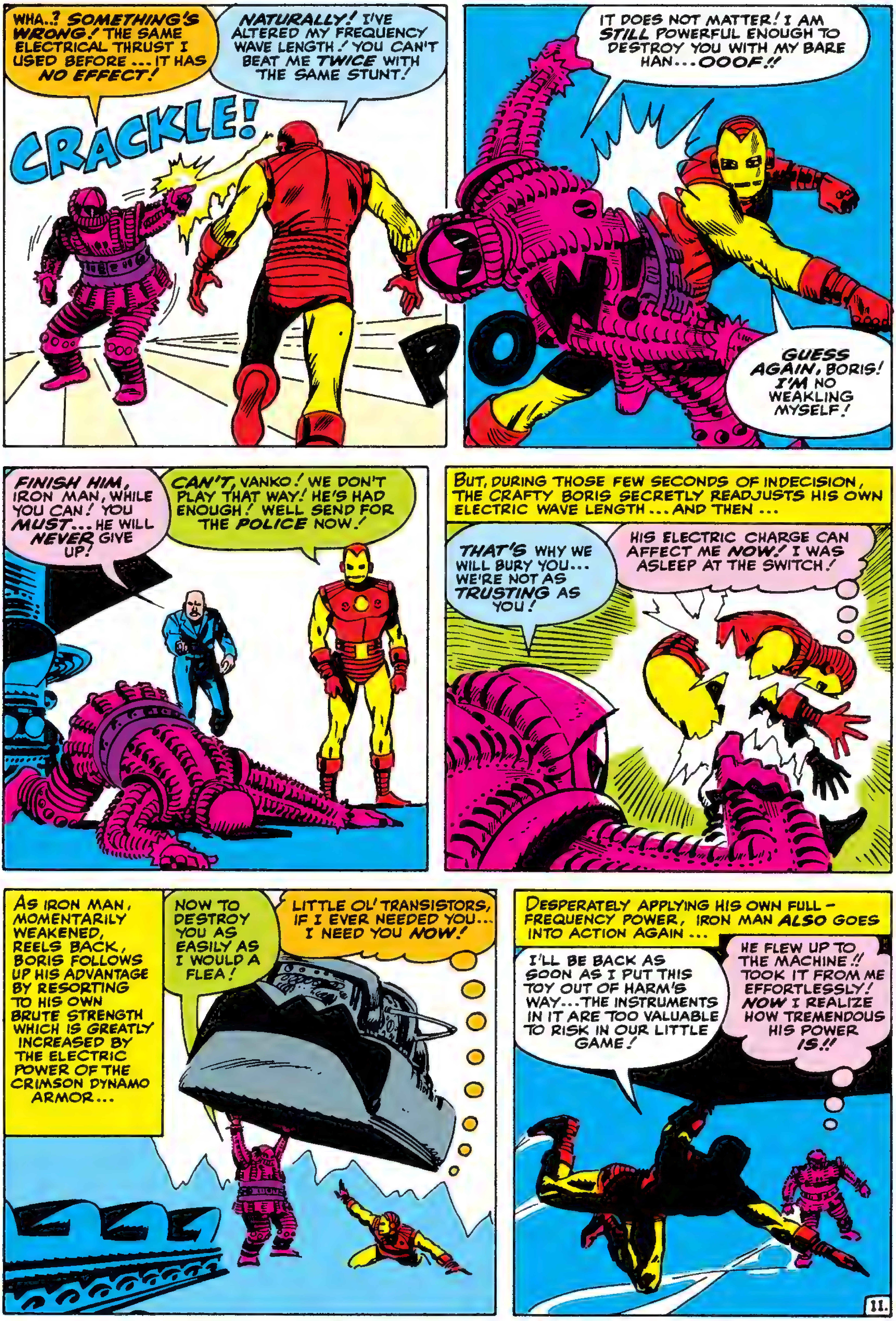

AND, AS THE POWERFUL RAY GUN TAKES EFFECT...
SO! NOW YOU ARE WRAPPED IN THE UNBREAKABLE NET! IT WAS A BRILLIANT INVENTION, VANKO! TOO BAD YOU HAD TO BE ONE OF ITS VICTIMS!
ONLY ONE MORE THING... I'LL START THIS LONG-PLAYING TAPE-RECORDING OF YOUR VOICE, TAKEN AT YOUR LAST LECTURE IN MOSCOW!
THEN, OUTSIDE THE LAB...
HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH THAT PACKAGE?
DELIVERING IT FOR PROFESSOR VANKO...
YOU CAN CHECK WITH HIM, IF YOU WANT... ALTHOUGH HE MAY NOT LIKE BEING INTERRUPTED IN THE MIDDLE OF A LECTURE...
HUH? OH, YEAH... I CAN HEAR HIM... AND I KNOW THAT GUY'S TEMPER WHEN HE'S DISTURBED... OKAY, PAL... TAKE OFF!
AS SOON AS WE FIND THE PROPER WAY OF DEALING WITH...
LATER... AT A MIDNIGHT RENDEZVOUS...
WE RECEIVED YOUR SIGNAL! WHAT HAVE YOU THERE?
ONLY THE FIRST INSTALLMENT! TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM AND KEEP HIM UNDER GUARD WHEN HE RECOVERS! I'LL BE BACK SOON WITH ANOTHER!
OUR LEADER SAID TO EXTERMINATE VANKO... NEVER DREAMING I COULD BRING HIM BACK ALIVE! I'LL BE A GREATER HERO NOW... AND MORE SO WHEN I'VE BEATEN STARK, AS WELL AS THE OVER-RATED IRON MAN! THE BLACK WIDOW AND BORIS CAN DEFEAT ANYONE!!
RETURNING SECRETLY TO THE PLANT, BORIS AGAIN SLIPS INTO VANKO'S LAB AND CAREFULLY DONS THE AWESOME SUIT OF THE CRIMSON DYNAMO...
THIS ELECTRIFIED SUIT WILL BE THE PERFECT DISGUISE FOR ME! NONE WILL SUSPECT THAT I AM NOT VANKO! AND NOW FOR IRON MAN... WHOSE DEFEAT WILL BE MY GREATEST TRIUMPH!

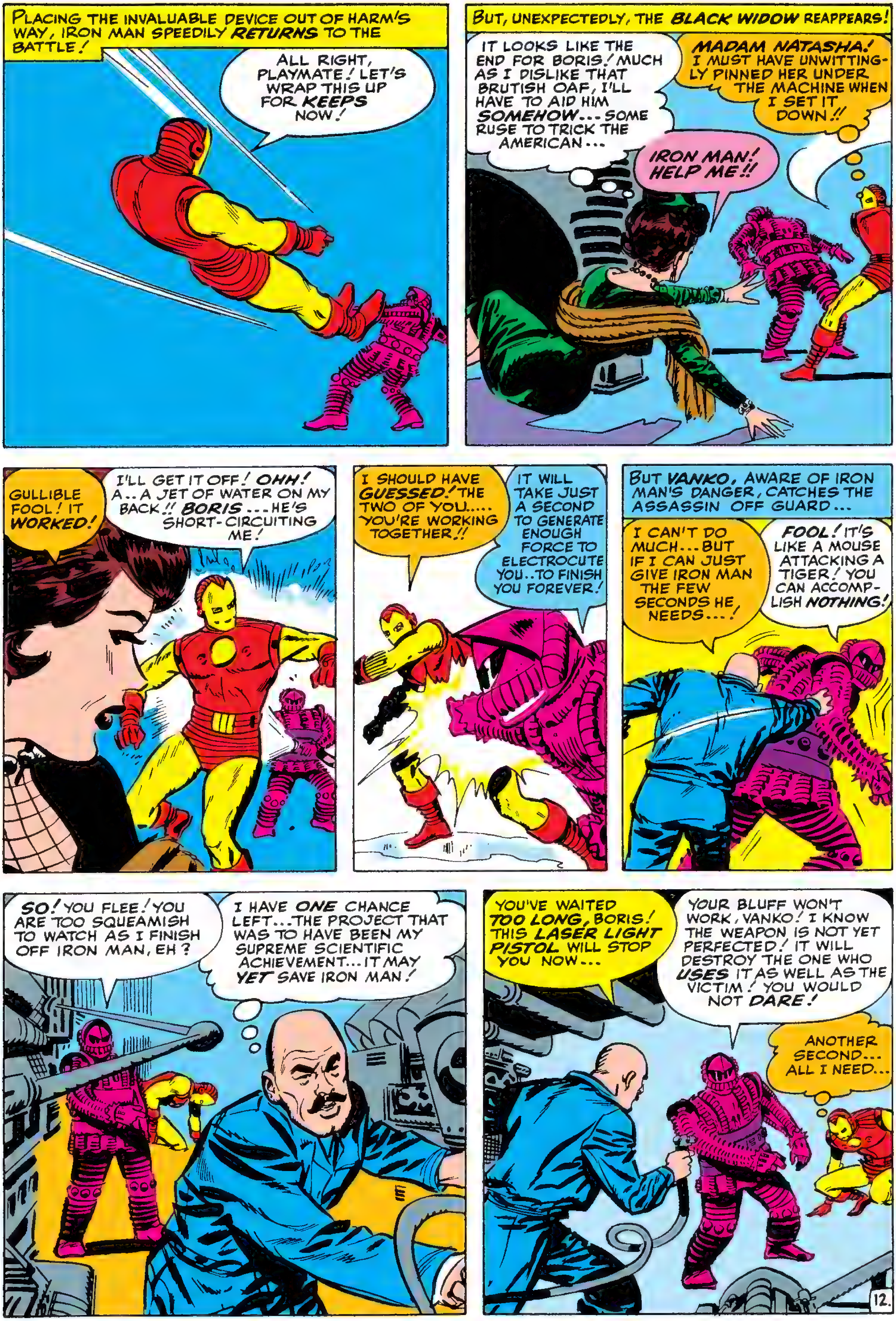

WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION, USING THE STARTLING POWER OF THE CRIMSON DYNAMO, BORIS BEGINS A ONE-MAN CAMPAIGN OF SABOTAGE FROM WITHIN STARK'S FACTORY...
THIS WILL SERVE A DOUBLE PURPOSE! IT WILL SLOW DOWN AMERICA'S DEFENSE PRODUCTION, AND MORE IMPORTANT, IT WILL BRING IRON MAN INTO THE OPEN WHERE I CAN DESTROY HIM, SO THAT HE CAN NEVER FRUSTRATE OUR PLANS FOR WORLD CONQUEST AGAIN!
CRACK!
MOMENTS LATER...
IT'S TOO BAD YOUR VISIT HERE HAS TO END IN A FEW DAYS, MADAME NATASHA!
I FIND MYSELF REGRETTING IT, TOO! I SHALL MISS YOU!
AN URGENT MESSAGE, MR. STARK! I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT...
AND SO...
IT WAS HAPPY! HE SAID I WAS NEEDED! THERE WAS A MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION AT THE PLANT... AND NO SIGN OF VANKO...
STARK CANNOT FOOL ME! HE IS WORRIED! BORIS MUST HAVE STRUCK A TELLING BLOW!
DON'T COME ANY CLOSER! IT COULD BE DANGEROUS! I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE YOU HERE!
WHAT A GLORIOUS SIGHT! STARK'S PLANT IS AN INFERNO!
WHAT A COLD WOMAN SHE IS! SO UNMOVED BY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT!
GLAD YOU'RE BACK, BOSS! MAYBE YOU CAN GET THINGS UNDER CONTROL NOW! THE FIRE STARTED IN THE AREA OF VANKO'S LAB! BUT HE'S GONE!
KEEP AT IT, HAPPY! I'LL BE WITH YOU AS SOON AS I ATTEND TO SOMETHING!
MUST CHANGE INTO MY OTHER GUISE... THAT OF IRON MAN!
AND, SPLIT SECONDS LATER...
AND NOW TO FIND OUT WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS! AS ARMOR-PLATED IRON MAN, I CAN PLUNGE INTO THIS BLAZING INFERNO WITHOUT BURNING ALIVE!
7

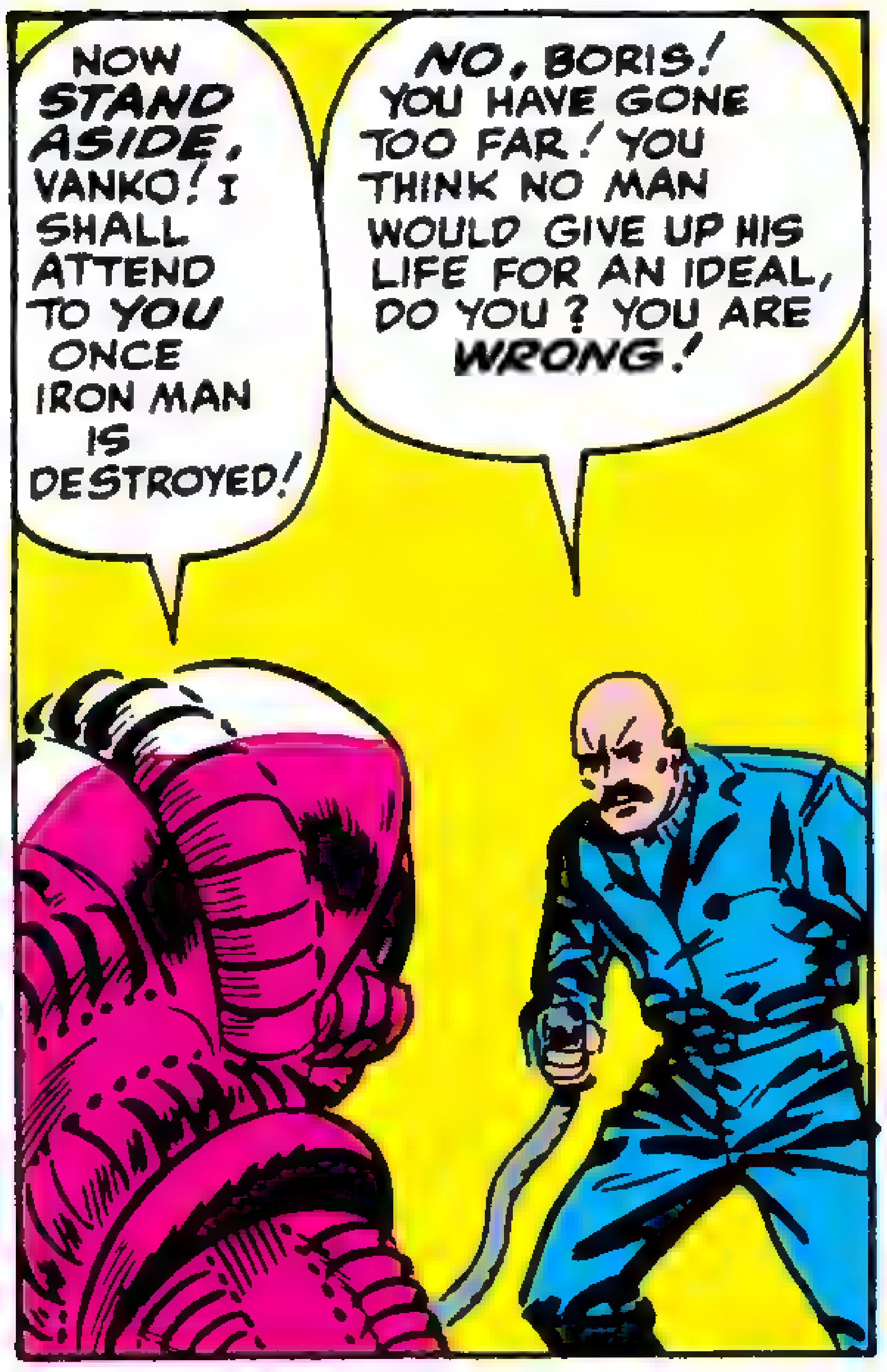

LOOK! IT'S IRON MAN!
HE'S TOO LATE TO STOP THE DAMAGE... BUT HE STILL MAY BE ABLE TO SAVE THE REST OF THE FACTORY!
I'VE GOT TO FIND VANKO! HIS WORK WITH THE LASER LIGHT RAY MIGHT HAVE STARTED THIS!
SECONDS LATER...
THE CRIMSON DYNAMO! VANKO! THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! FOLLOW ME! I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE!
IRON MAN, AT LAST! THE FOOL THINKS I'M VANKO!
CRASH!
WHAT'S WRONG? OH, YOU DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THE LASER RAY MACHINE, EH? OKAY, I'LL HELP YOU GET IT OUT OF HERE!
I'LL WAIT TILL HE LIFTS THE MACHINE! THEN BORIS SHALL STRIKE!
LET'S HOPE WE CAN SAVE IT IN TIME! IT WOULD TAKE YEARS TO REBUILD IF IT'S DESTROYED!
NOW'S MY CHANCE!.. WHILE HE'S COMPLETELY OFF-GUARD!
OHH!
A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE ELECTRICAL CHARGE VANKO PROVIDED IN THIS SUIT!
I'M BEING DRAINED OF MY TRANSISTOR POWER... VANKO! CAN IT BE!? HAVE YOU REALLY TURNED ON ME? WAS I MISTAKEN AFTER ALL?? UHH... GROWING WEAKER... B-BLACKING OUT...
HAH! THE MUCH-VAUNTED IRON MAN, HELPLESS ONCE HIS ELECTRICAL TRANSISTOR CIRCUITS ARE DAMAGED! WITHIN SECONDS HE'LL BE UNCONSCIOUS, AND THEN...
UNDER COVER OF THE THICK BLANKET OF SMOKE, I'LL ESCAPE WITH MY GREATEST PRIZE! AND IF I'M SEEN, THE FOOLS WILL THINK I'M RESCUING IRON MAN!

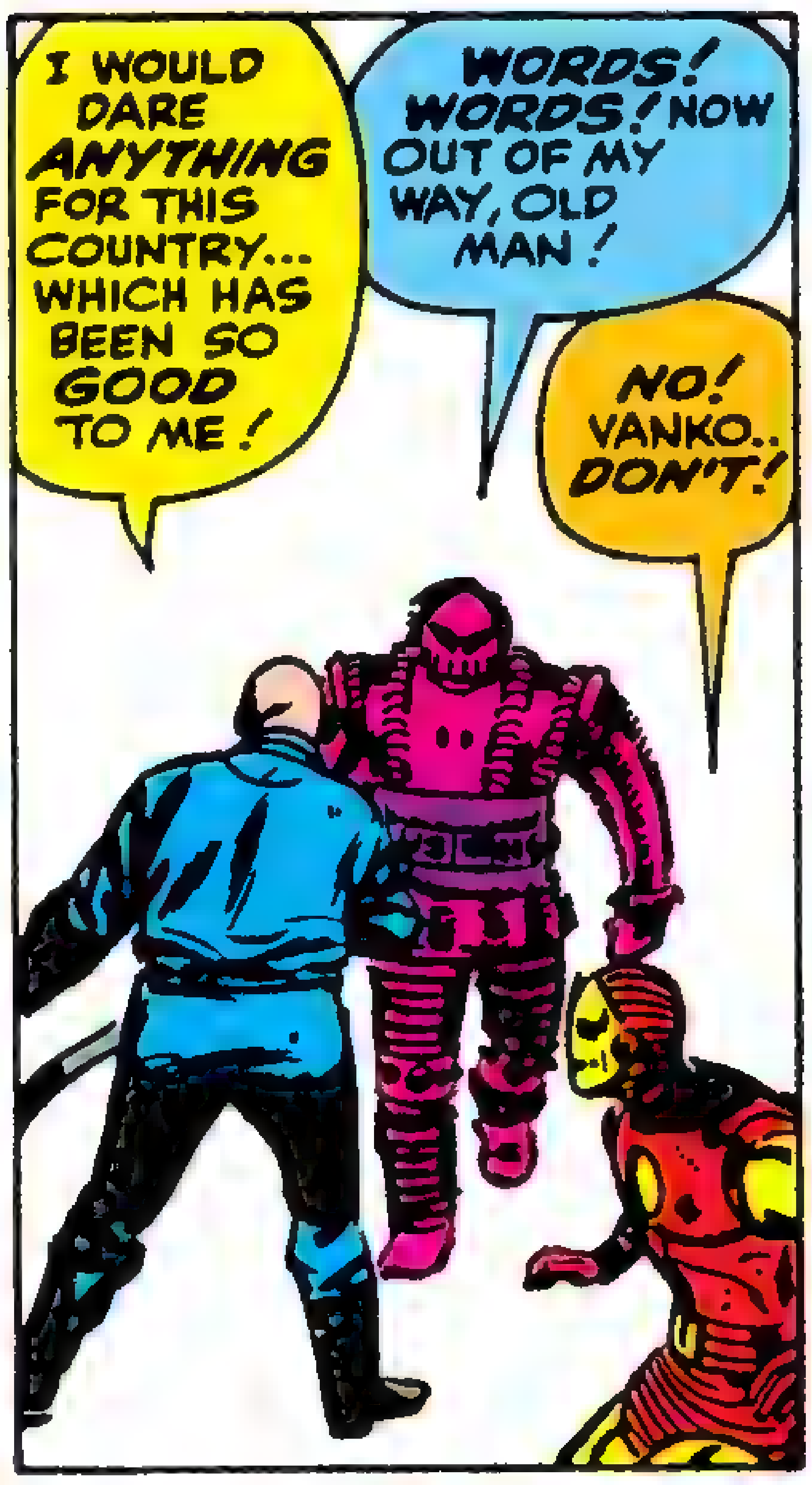

LATER, BACK AT THE SUB...
YOU SUBDUED *IRON MAN*, COMRADE? INCREDIBLE! ARE YOU SURE HE'S *TOTALLY HARMLESS?*
COMPLETELY, COMRADE COMMANDER! HE HAS RECEIVED ENOUGH ELECTRIC CURRENT TO DESTROY *TWENTY* MEN!
NOW IRON MAN IS HELPLESS AND LOCKED BEHIND DOORS OF PLATE STEEL! YOU NEED WORRY ABOUT HIM NO LONGER!
SO YOU SAY! BUT I HAVE HEARD *TOO MUCH* OF THIS MAN! I SHALL NOT RELAX UNTIL HE IS OFF MY SHIP AND SAFELY IMPRISONED IN THE HOMELAND!
CLANK!
MOMENTS LATER...
WHAT A *HERO'S WELCOME* I SHALL RECEIVE WHEN I RETURN! NOW, THE FINAL DETAIL... THE BLACK WIDOW AND I WILL EASILY FINISH OFF ANTHONY STARK... NOW THAT HIS IRON BODY GUARD CANNOT HELP HIM!
MEANWHILE, THE WEAKENED IRON MAN, DESPERATELY FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE, SLOWLY RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS...
MY ELECTRIC POWER HAS BEEN SHORT-CIRCUITED... I'VE GOT TO RECHARGE SOMEHOW... BUT *HOW?* WHERE *AM* I.??
CAN'T WAIT MUCH LONGER... MUST FIND SOME ELECTRIC CURRENT TO REACTIVATE MY CIRCUITS!! WAIT... THAT LIGHT BULB... OVERHEAD...
SUMMONING ALL HIS REMAINING STRENGTH, IRON MAN SMASHES THE GLASS BULB, AND...
LUCKY I CARRY THIS SPARE EXTENSION CORD FOR ANY EMERGENCIES... AH... I CAN FEEL MY ENERGY... MY VERY LIFE FORCE... FEEDING BACK...
NOW, WITH THE FULL POWER OF IRON MAN, I CAN TEAR THIS PLACE APART, AND... *VANKO!!* WHAT HAVE THEY *DONE* TO YOU? SO IT WAS SOMEONE *ELSE* WHO STRUCK ME DOWN... I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED!*
9.

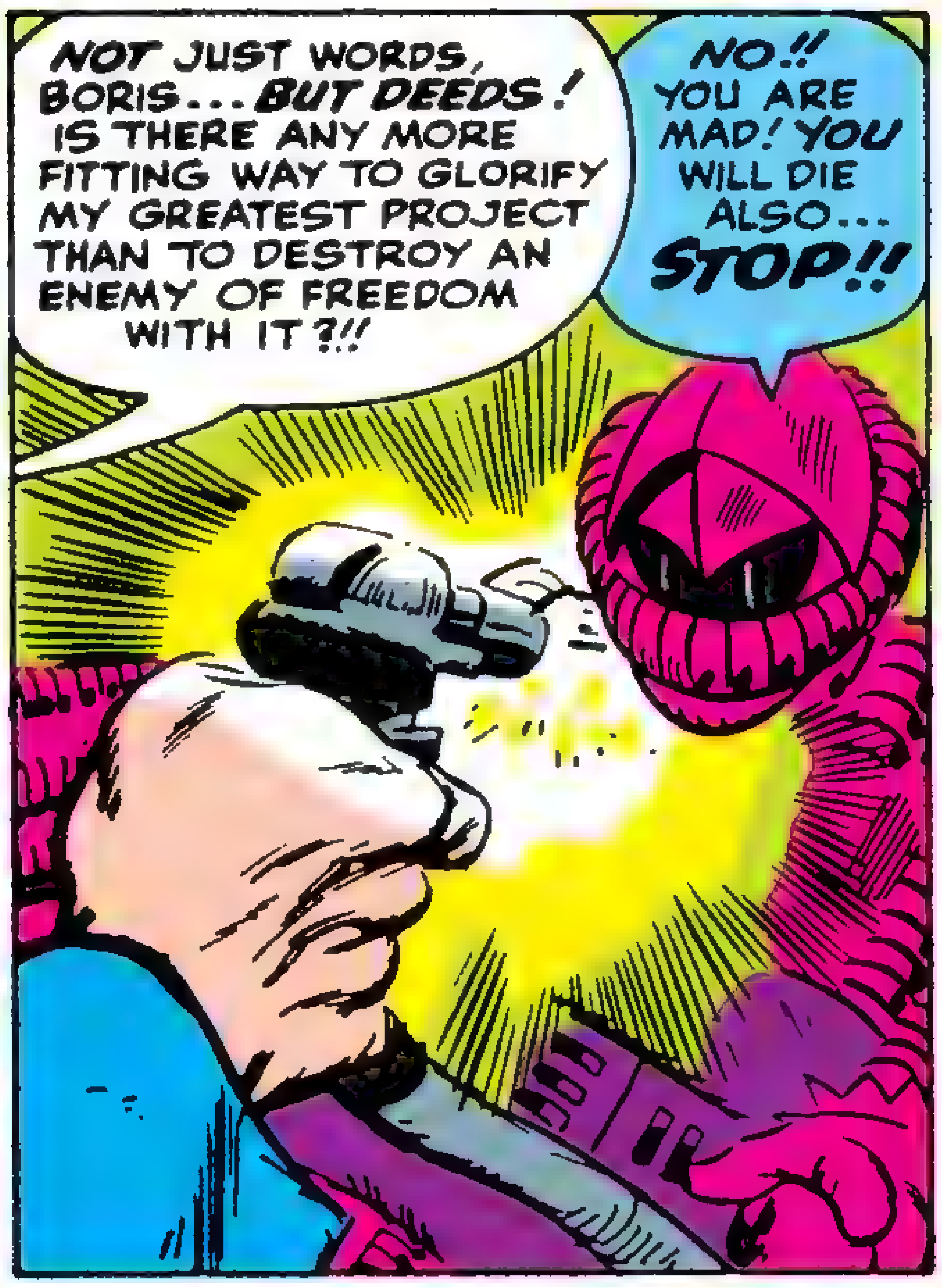

IN SECONDS, IRON MAN RIPS OFF THE SYNTHETIC WIRE MESH NET, FREEING VANKO! THEN, SLEDGE-HAMMER FISTS, AIDED BY POWERFUL TRANSISTOR FORCE, BATTER AN ESCAPE ROUTE RIGHT THROUGH THE STEEL SHELL OF THE SUB...
SMASH!
UNTIL...
YOU *DID* IT, IRON MAN!! YOU *FREED* US! BUT...ARE YOUR SMALL FLYING JETS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CARRY *MY* WEIGHT, TOO?
THEY'RE *ULTRA-TURBO JETS,* VANKO! THEY COULD LIFT AN *ELEPHANT,* IF NEED BE! THERE... WE'RE SAFELY OUT OF RANGE NOW!
THEY'VE ESCAPED! WE'LL PAY WITH OUR *LIVES* FOR THIS!
IT'S ALL *MY* FAULT FOR INVOLVING YOU IN MY PAST, IRON MAN! MY ENEMIES DO NOT GIVE UP EASILY!
THAT'S WHAT MAKES THEM DANGEROUS, VANKO, BUT WE'LL SHOW THEM *WE* CAN BE EQUALLY DANGEROUS!
THINKING HE'S DEFEATED YOU, BORIS WILL RETURN TO THE FACTORY TO DESTROY OUR LASER RAY WEAPON!!
BORIS! SO HE'S THE ONE!
IRON MAN... *LOOK!* MY CRIMSON DYNAMO COSTUME! IT MUST BE *HIM!*
YOU MUST BE CAREFUL! HE, TOO, IS A SCIENTIST... A MAN OF GREAT ABILITY... AND GREATER *STRENGTH!!*
NO, VANKO! THIS IS NO TIME FOR CAUTION!! I'VE *RETURNED,*
IRON MAN! HOW??
WE'LL PLAY TWENTY QUESTIONS LATER, YOU TREACHEROUS SPY!! RIGHT NOW, WE'LL FIND OUT HOW GOOD YOU ARE WHEN I'VE GOT *BOTH HANDS FREE!*
CRASH

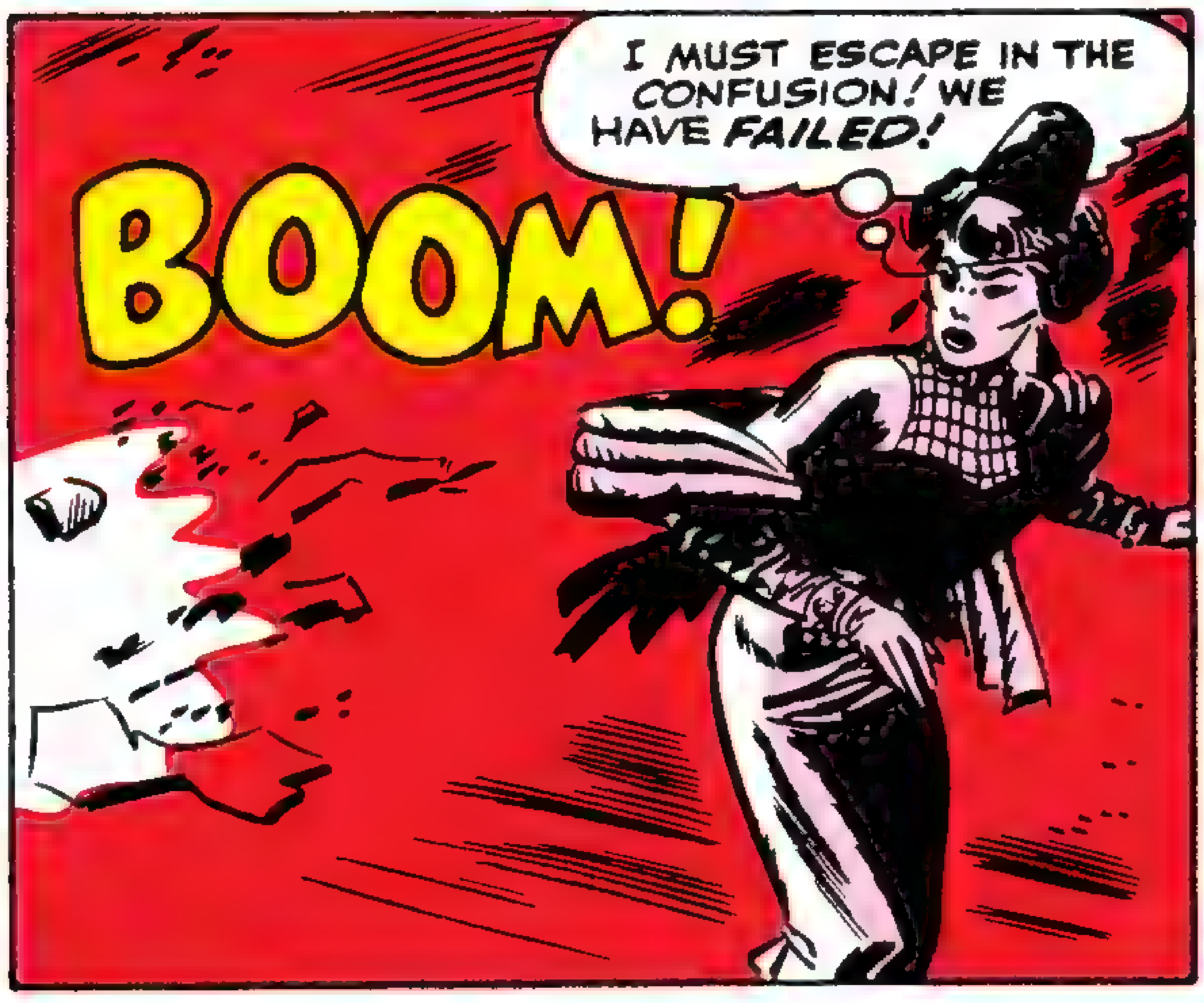

WHA..? SOMETHING'S WRONG! THE SAME ELECTRICAL THRUST I USED BEFORE ... IT HAS NO EFFECT!
NATURALLY! I'VE ALTERED MY FREQUENCY WAVE LENGTH! YOU CAN'T BEAT ME TWICE WITH THE SAME STUNT!
CRACKLE!
IT DOES NOT MATTER! I AM STILL POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DESTROY YOU WITH MY BARE HAN... OOOF!!
POW!
GUESS AGAIN, BORIS! I'M NO WEAKLING MYSELF!
FINISH HIM, IRON MAN, WHILE YOU CAN! YOU MUST... HE WILL NEVER GIVE UP!
CAN'T, VANKO! WE DON'T PLAY THAT WAY! HE'S HAD ENOUGH! WE'LL SEND FOR THE POLICE NOW!
BUT, DURING THOSE FEW SECONDS OF INDECISION, THE CRAFTY BORIS SECRETLY READJUSTS HIS OWN ELECTRIC WAVE LENGTH ... AND THEN ...
THAT'S WHY WE WILL BURY YOU... WE'RE NOT AS TRUSTING AS YOU!
HIS ELECTRIC CHARGE CAN AFFECT ME NOW! I WAS ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH!
AS IRON MAN, MOMENTARILY WEAKENED, REELS BACK, BORIS FOLLOWS UP HIS ADVANTAGE BY RESORTING TO HIS OWN BRUTE STRENGTH WHICH IS GREATLY INCREASED BY THE ELECTRIC POWER OF THE CRIMSON DYNAMO ARMOR...
NOW TO DESTROY YOU AS EASILY AS I WOULD A FLEA!
LITTLE OL' TRANSISTORS, IF I EVER NEEDED YOU... I NEED YOU NOW!
DESPERATELY APPLYING HIS OWN FULL-FREQUENCY POWER, IRON MAN ALSO GOES INTO ACTION AGAIN ...
I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS I PUT THIS TOY OUT OF HARM'S WAY... THE INSTRUMENTS IN IT ARE TOO VALUABLE TO RISK IN OUR LITTLE GAME!
HE FLEW UP TO THE MACHINE!! TOOK IT FROM ME EFFORTLESSLY! NOW I REALIZE HOW TREMENDOUS HIS POWER IS!!

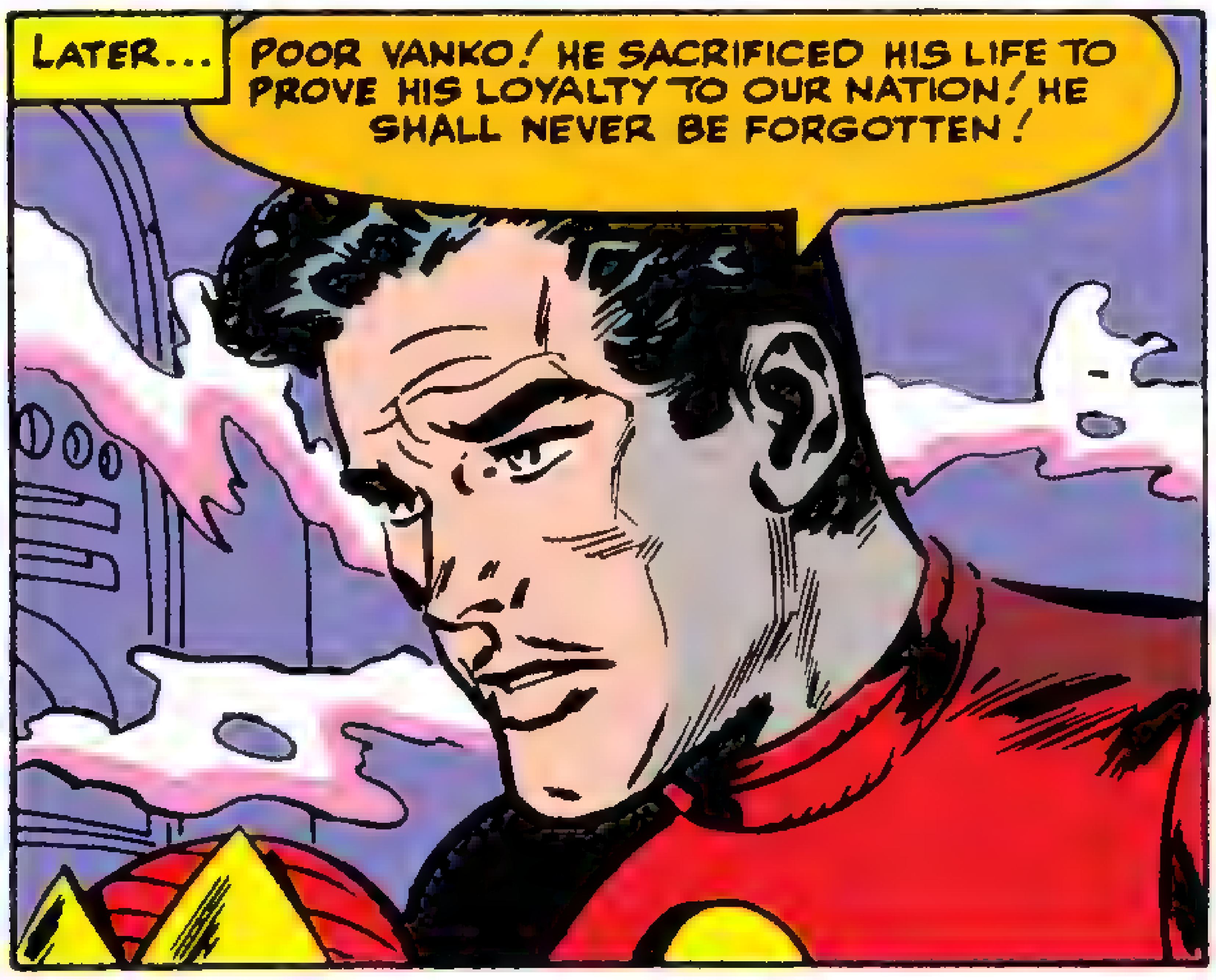

PLACING THE INVALUABLE DEVICE OUT OF HARM'S WAY, IRON MAN SPEEDILY *RETURNS* TO THE BATTLE!
ALL RIGHT, PLAYMATE! LET'S WRAP THIS UP FOR *KEEPS* NOW!
BUT, UNEXPECTEDLY, THE *BLACK WIDOW* REAPPEARS!
IT LOOKS LIKE THE END FOR BORIS! MUCH AS I DISLIKE THAT BRUTISH OAF, I'LL HAVE TO AID HIM *SOMEHOW*... SOME RUSE TO TRICK THE AMERICAN...
MADAM NATASHA! I MUST HAVE UNWITTINGLY PINNED HER UNDER THE MACHINE WHEN I SET IT DOWN!!
IRON MAN! HELP ME!!
GULLIBLE FOOL! IT *WORKED!*
I'LL GET IT OFF! *OHH!* A.. A JET OF WATER ON MY BACK!! *BORIS*... HE'S SHORT-CIRCUITING ME!
I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED!* THE TWO OF YOU.... YOU'RE WORKING TOGETHER!!
IT WILL TAKE JUST A SECOND TO GENERATE ENOUGH FORCE TO ELECTROCUTE YOU..TO FINISH YOU FOREVER!
BUT *VANKO*, AWARE OF IRON MAN'S DANGER, CATCHES THE ASSASSIN OFF GUARD...
I CAN'T DO MUCH... BUT IF I CAN JUST GIVE IRON MAN THE FEW SECONDS HE NEEDS...!
FOOL! IT'S LIKE A MOUSE ATTACKING A TIGER! YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH *NOTHING!*
SO! YOU FLEE! YOU ARE TOO SQUEAMISH TO WATCH AS I FINISH OFF IRON MAN, EH?
I HAVE *ONE* CHANCE LEFT... THE PROJECT THAT WAS TO HAVE BEEN MY SUPREME SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENT... IT MAY *YET* SAVE IRON MAN!
YOU'VE WAITED *TOO LONG*, BORIS! THIS *LASER LIGHT PISTOL* WILL STOP YOU NOW...
YOUR BLUFF WON'T WORK, VANKO! I KNOW THE WEAPON IS NOT YET PERFECTED! IT WILL DESTROY THE ONE WHO *USES* IT AS WELL AS THE VICTIM! YOU WOULD NOT *DARE!*
ANOTHER SECOND... ALL I NEED...
12.

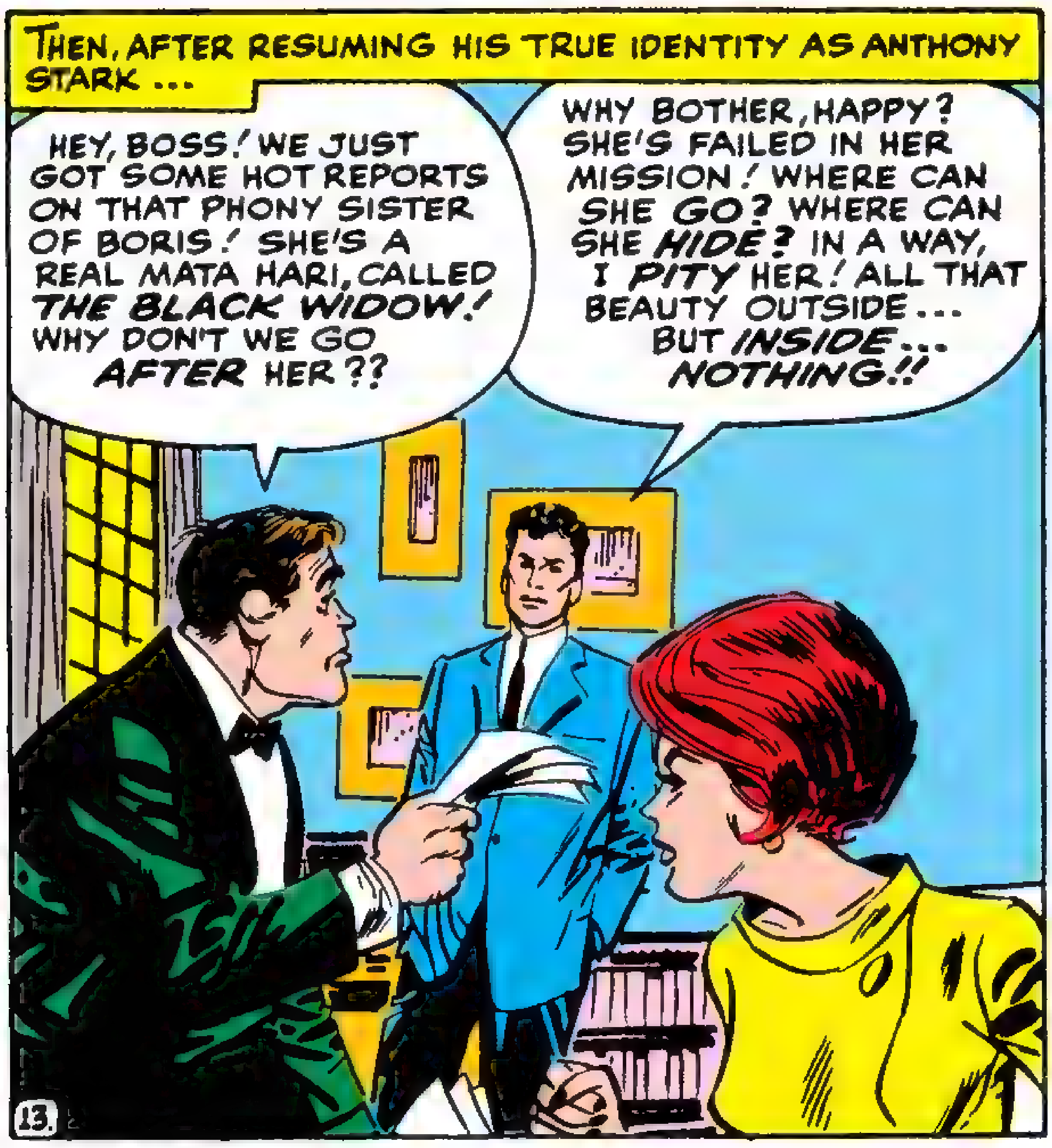

NOW STAND ASIDE, VANKO! I SHALL ATTEND TO YOU ONCE IRON MAN IS DESTROYED!
NO, BORIS! YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR! YOU THINK NO MAN WOULD GIVE UP HIS LIFE FOR AN IDEAL, DO YOU? YOU ARE WRONG!

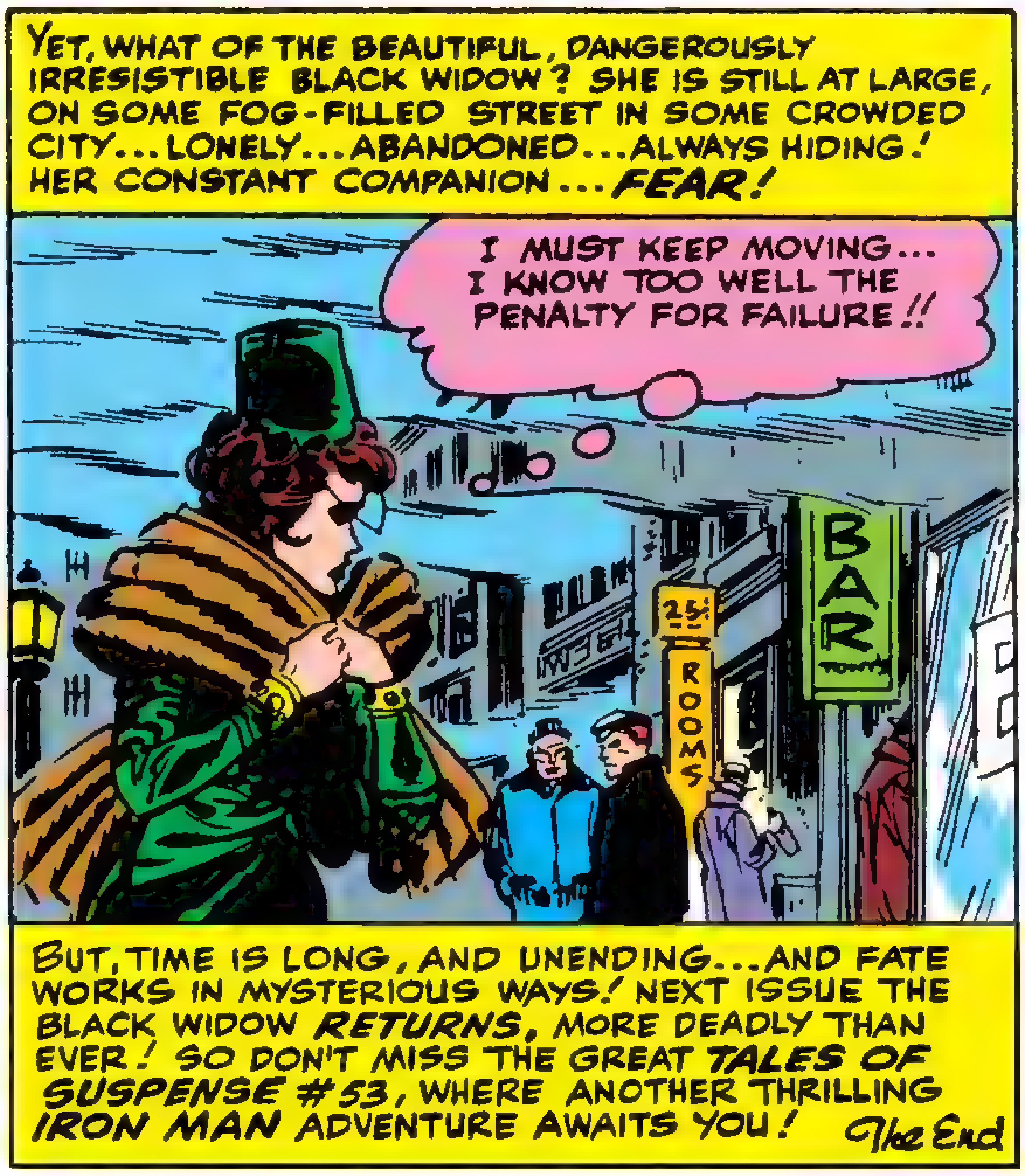

I WOULD DARE ANYTHING FOR THIS COUNTRY... WHICH HAS BEEN SO GOOD TO ME!
WORDS! WORDS! NOW OUT OF MY WAY, OLD MAN!
NO! VANKO.. DON'T!


NOT JUST WORDS, BORIS... BUT DEEDS! IS THERE ANY MORE FITTING WAY TO GLORIFY MY GREATEST PROJECT THAN TO DESTROY AN ENEMY OF FREEDOM WITH IT?!!
NO!! YOU ARE MAD! YOU WILL DIE ALSO... STOP!!

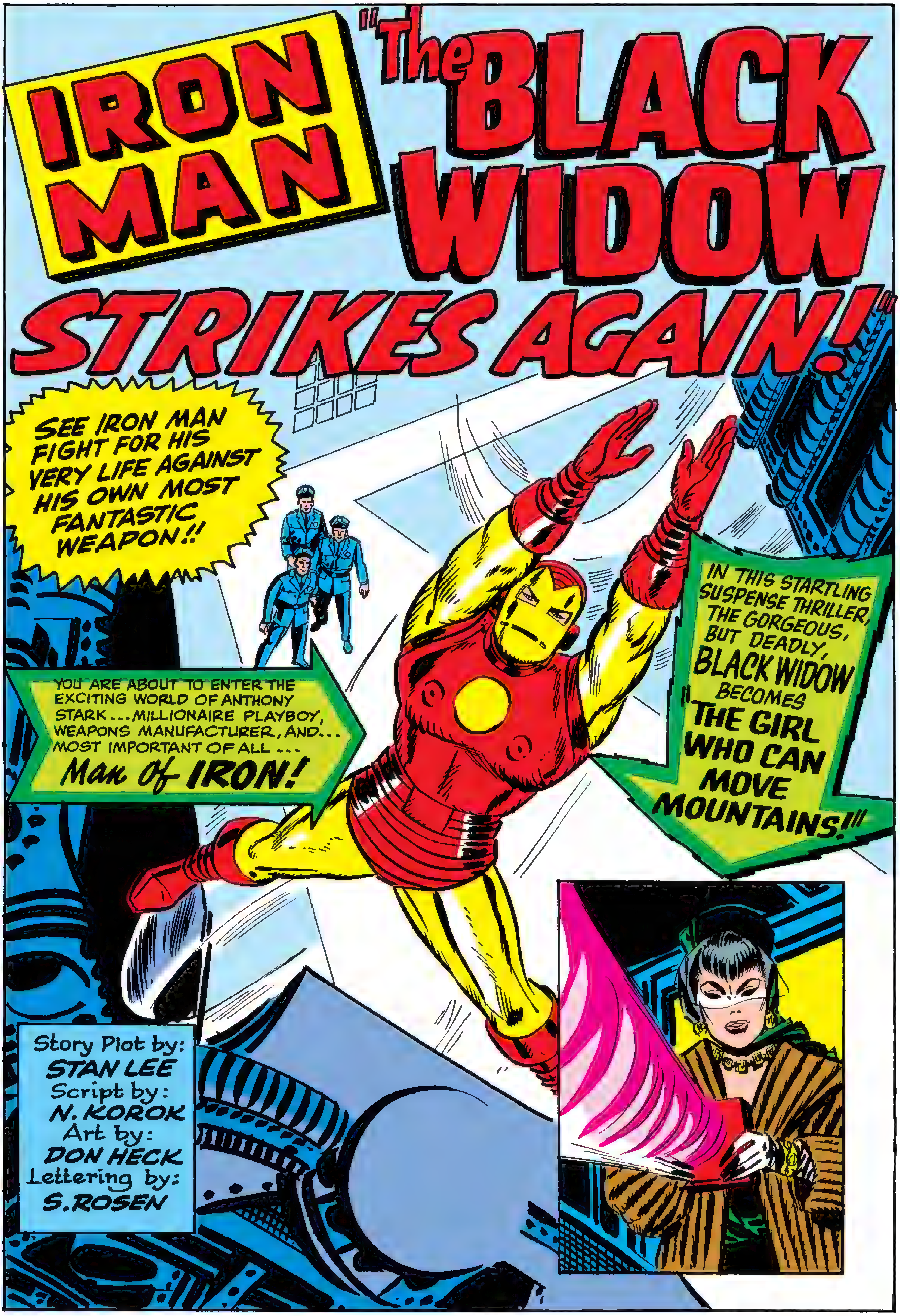

I MUST ESCAPE IN THE CONFUSION! WE HAVE FAILED!
BOOM!

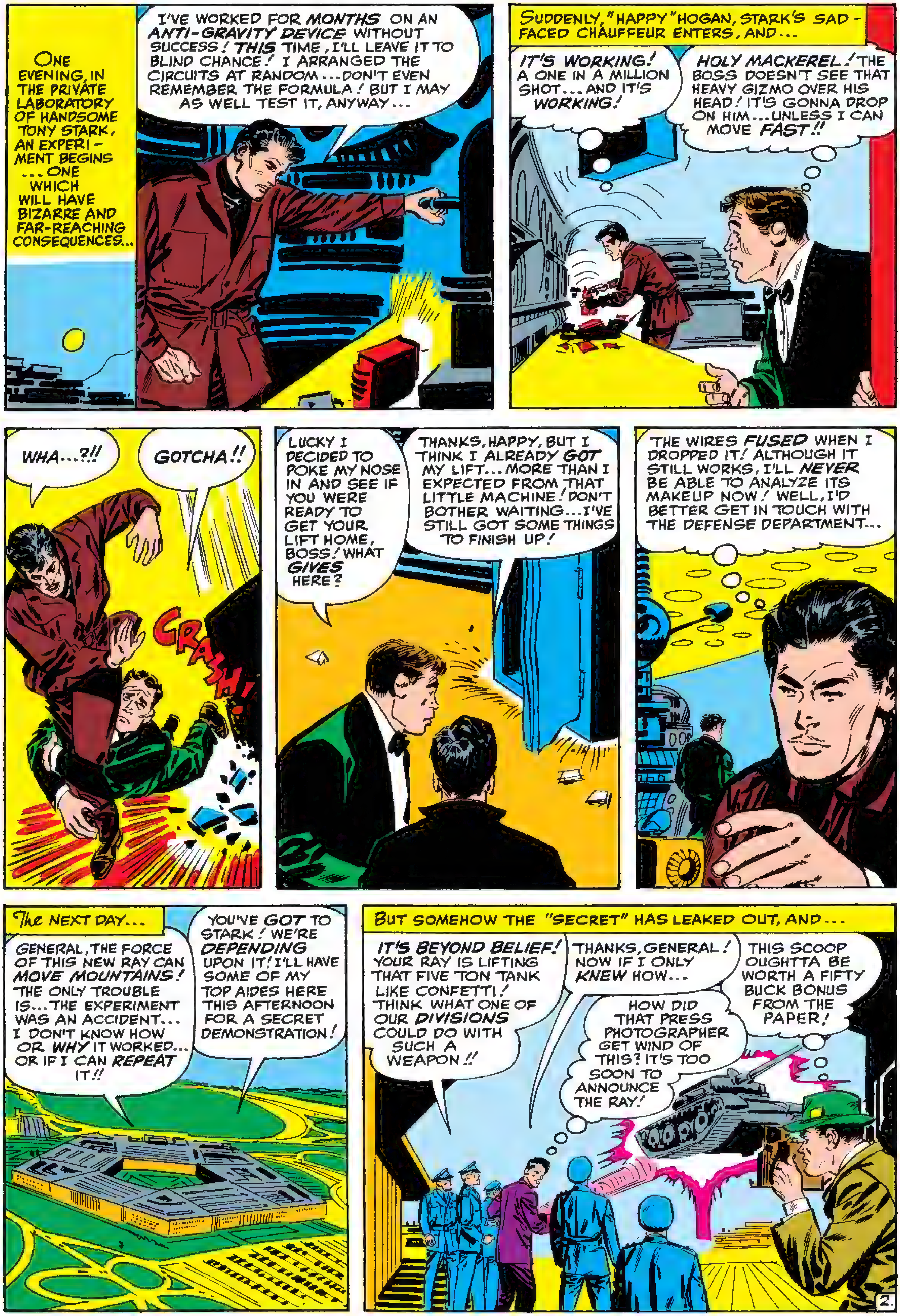

LATER...
POOR VANKO! HE SACRIFICED HIS LIFE TO PROVE HIS LOYALTY TO OUR NATION! HE SHALL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN!

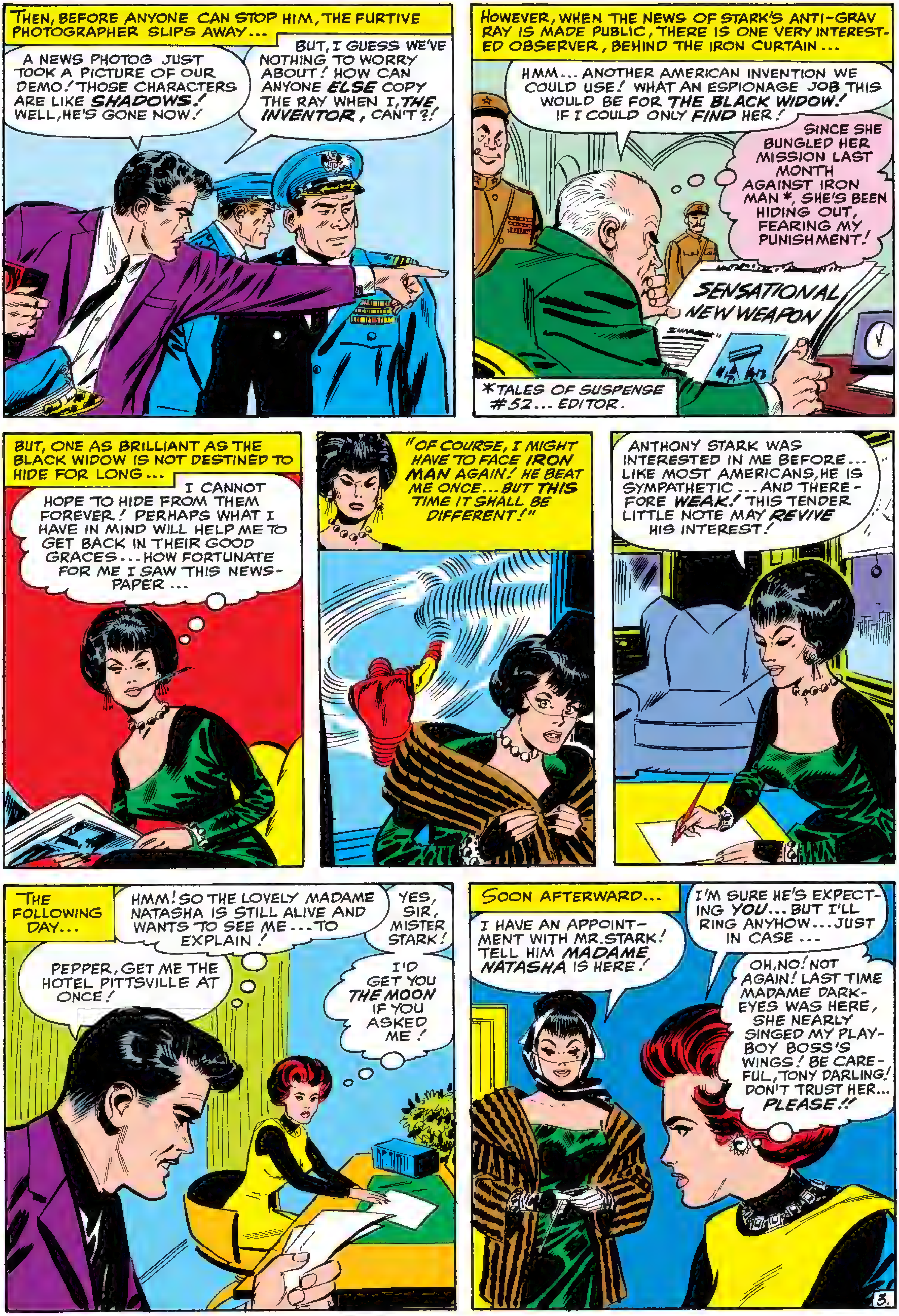

THEN, AFTER RESUMING HIS TRUE IDENTITY AS ANTHONY STARK...
HEY, BOSS! WE JUST GOT SOME HOT REPORTS ON THAT PHONY SISTER OF BORIS! SHE'S A REAL MATA HARI, CALLED THE BLACK WIDOW! WHY DON'T WE GO AFTER HER??
WHY BOTHER, HAPPY? SHE'S FAILED IN HER MISSION! WHERE CAN SHE GO? WHERE CAN SHE HIDE? IN A WAY, I PITY HER! ALL THAT BEAUTY OUTSIDE... BUT INSIDE... NOTHING!!

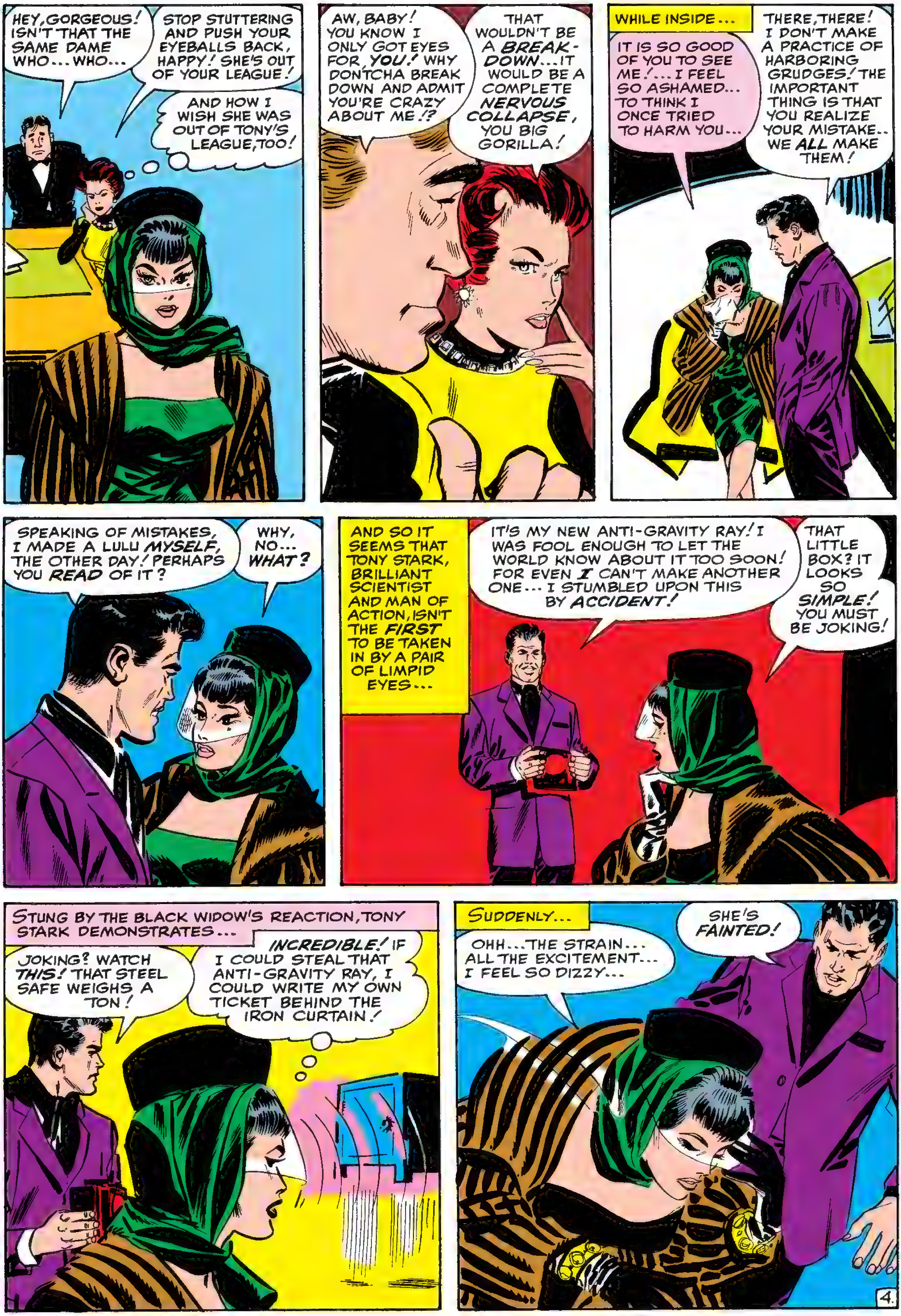

YET, WHAT OF THE BEAUTIFUL, DANGEROUSLY IRRESISTIBLE BLACK WIDOW? SHE IS STILL AT LARGE, ON SOME FOG-FILLED STREET IN SOME CROWDED CITY... LONELY... ABANDONED... ALWAYS HIDING! HER CONSTANT COMPANION... FEAR!
I MUST KEEP MOVING... I KNOW TOO WELL THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE!!
BAR
25¢ ROOMS
BUT, TIME IS LONG, AND UNENDING... AND FATE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS! NEXT ISSUE THE BLACK WIDOW RETURNS, MORE DEADLY THAN EVER! SO DON'T MISS THE GREAT TALES OF SUSPENSE #53, WHERE ANOTHER THRILLING IRON MAN ADVENTURE AWAITS YOU!
The End

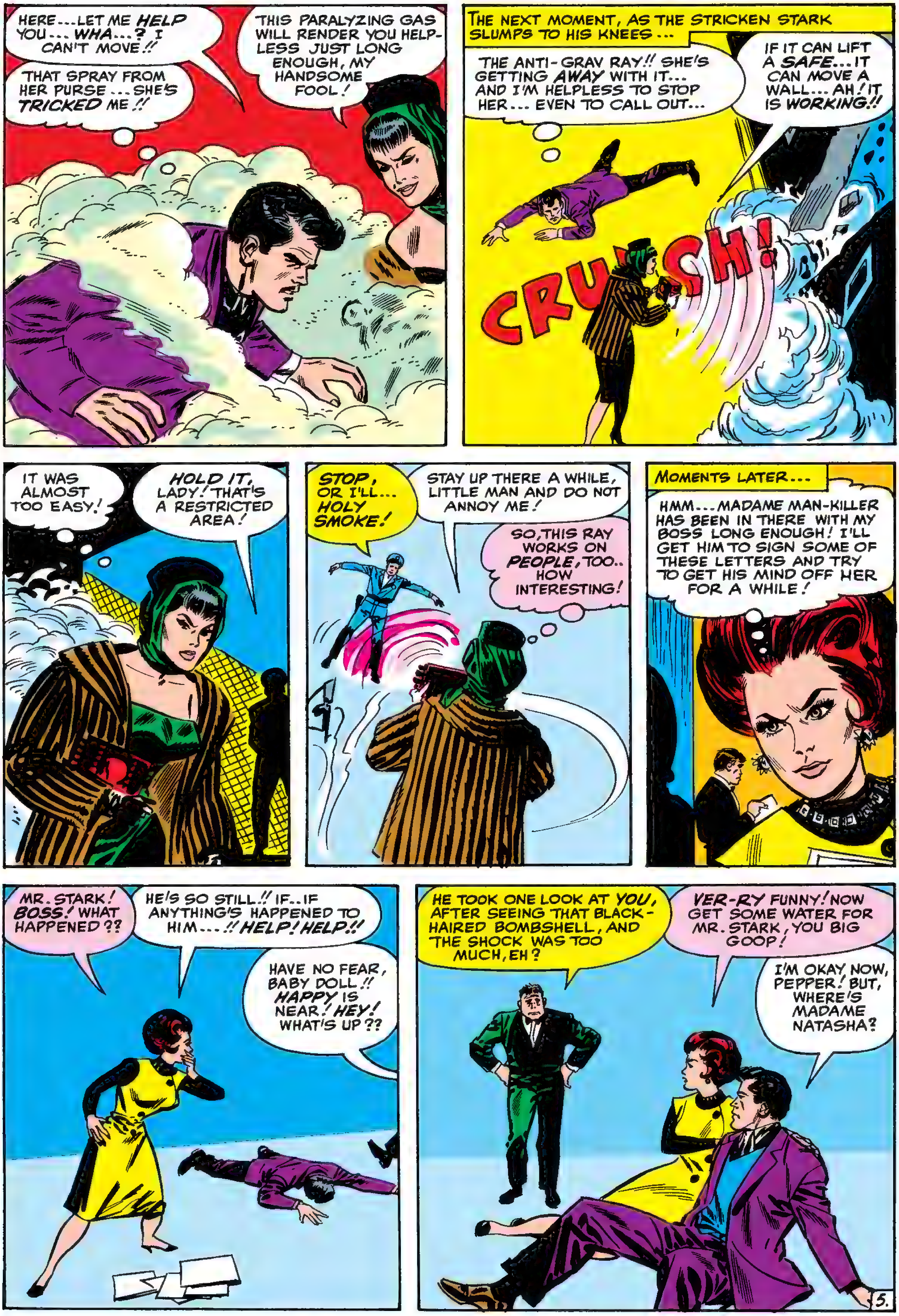
TALES OF SUSPENSE
featuring
THE POWER OF
IRON MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
53 MAY
IND.
ONLY THE BEAUTIFUL BUT DEADLY MADAME NATASHA COULD TURN IRON MAN'S MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON AGAINST HIM! DON'T MISS:
"The BLACK WIDOW STRIKES AGAIN!"
IMPORTANT!!! IN THIS GREAT ISSUE YOU WILL LEARN FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME... "THE ORIGIN OF The WATCHER!"

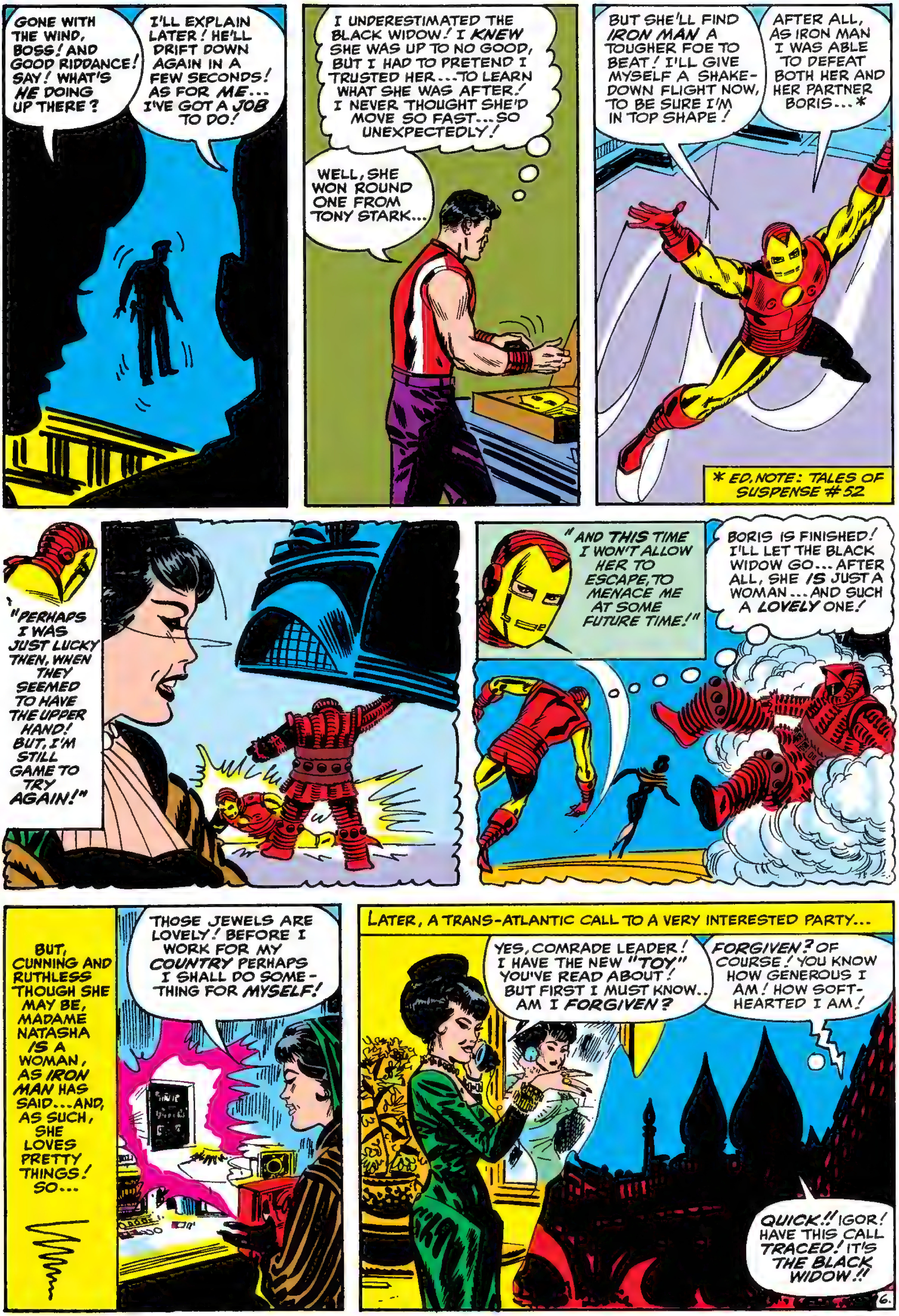

IRON MAN
"The BLACK WIDOW STRIKES AGAIN!"
SEE IRON MAN FIGHT FOR HIS VERY LIFE AGAINST HIS OWN MOST FANTASTIC WEAPON!!
YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENTER THE EXCITING WORLD OF ANTHONY STARK... MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY, WEAPONS MANUFACTURER, AND... MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL... Man of IRON!
IN THIS STARTLING SUSPENSE THRILLER, THE GORGEOUS, BUT DEADLY, BLACK WIDOW BECOMES "THE GIRL WHO CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS!"
Story Plot by: STAN LEE
Script by: N. KOROK
Art by: DON HECK
Lettering by: S. ROSEN


ONE EVENING, IN THE PRIVATE LABORATORY OF HANDSOME TONY STARK, AN EXPERIMENT BEGINS ... ONE WHICH WILL HAVE BIZARRE AND FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES...
I'VE WORKED FOR *MONTHS* ON AN *ANTI-GRAVITY DEVICE* WITHOUT SUCCESS! *THIS* TIME, I'LL LEAVE IT TO BLIND CHANCE! I ARRANGED THE CIRCUITS AT RANDOM ... DON'T EVEN REMEMBER THE FORMULA! BUT I MAY AS WELL TEST IT, ANYWAY...
SUDDENLY, "HAPPY" HOGAN, STARK'S SAD-FACED CHAUFFEUR ENTERS, AND...
IT'S WORKING! A ONE IN A MILLION SHOT... AND IT'S *WORKING!*
HOLY MACKEREL! THE BOSS DOESN'T SEE THAT HEAVY GIZMO OVER HIS HEAD! IT'S GONNA DROP ON HIM... UNLESS I CAN MOVE *FAST!!*
WHA...?!!
GOTCHA!!
CRASH!
LUCKY I DECIDED TO POKE MY NOSE IN AND SEE IF YOU WERE READY TO GET YOUR LIFT HOME, BOSS! WHAT *GIVES* HERE?
THANKS, HAPPY, BUT I THINK I ALREADY *GOT* MY LIFT... MORE THAN I EXPECTED FROM THAT LITTLE MACHINE! DON'T BOTHER WAITING... I'VE STILL GOT SOME THINGS TO FINISH UP!
THE WIRES *FUSED* WHEN I DROPPED IT! ALTHOUGH IT STILL WORKS, I'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO ANALYZE ITS MAKEUP NOW! WELL, I'D BETTER GET IN TOUCH WITH THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT...
THE NEXT DAY...
GENERAL, THE FORCE OF THIS NEW RAY CAN *MOVE MOUNTAINS!* THE ONLY TROUBLE IS... THE EXPERIMENT WAS AN ACCIDENT... I DON'T KNOW HOW OR *WHY* IT WORKED... OR IF I CAN *REPEAT* IT!!
YOU'VE *GOT* TO STARK! WE'RE *DEPENDING* UPON IT! I'LL HAVE SOME OF MY TOP AIDES HERE THIS AFTERNOON FOR A SECRET DEMONSTRATION!
BUT SOMEHOW THE "SECRET" HAS LEAKED OUT, AND...
IT'S BEYOND BELIEF! YOUR RAY IS LIFTING THAT FIVE TON TANK LIKE CONFETTI! THINK WHAT ONE OF OUR *DIVISIONS* COULD DO WITH SUCH A WEAPON!!
THANKS, GENERAL! NOW IF I ONLY *KNEW* HOW...
HOW DID THAT PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER GET WIND OF THIS? IT'S TOO SOON TO ANNOUNCE THE RAY!
THIS SCOOP OUGHTTA BE WORTH A FIFTY BUCK BONUS FROM THE PAPER!
2.


THEN, BEFORE ANYONE CAN STOP HIM, THE FURTIVE PHOTOGRAPHER SLIPS AWAY...
A NEWS PHOTOG JUST TOOK A PICTURE OF OUR DEMO! THOSE CHARACTERS ARE LIKE SHADOWS! WELL, HE'S GONE NOW!
BUT, I GUESS WE'VE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! HOW CAN ANYONE ELSE COPY THE RAY WHEN I, THE INVENTOR, CAN'T?!
HOWEVER, WHEN THE NEWS OF STARK'S ANTI-GRAV RAY IS MADE PUBLIC, THERE IS ONE VERY INTERESTED OBSERVER, BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN...
HMM... ANOTHER AMERICAN INVENTION WE COULD USE! WHAT AN ESPIONAGE JOB THIS WOULD BE FOR THE BLACK WIDOW! IF I COULD ONLY FIND HER!
SINCE SHE BUNGLED HER MISSION LAST MONTH AGAINST IRON MAN *, SHE'S BEEN HIDING OUT, FEARING MY PUNISHMENT!
SENSATIONAL NEW WEAPON
*TALES OF SUSPENSE #52... EDITOR.
BUT, ONE AS BRILLIANT AS THE BLACK WIDOW IS NOT DESTINED TO HIDE FOR LONG...
I CANNOT HOPE TO HIDE FROM THEM FOREVER! PERHAPS WHAT I HAVE IN MIND WILL HELP ME TO GET BACK IN THEIR GOOD GRACES... HOW FORTUNATE FOR ME I SAW THIS NEWSPAPER...
"OF COURSE, I MIGHT HAVE TO FACE IRON MAN AGAIN! HE BEAT ME ONCE... BUT THIS TIME IT SHALL BE DIFFERENT!"
ANTHONY STARK WAS INTERESTED IN ME BEFORE... LIKE MOST AMERICANS, HE IS SYMPATHETIC... AND THEREFORE WEAK! THIS TENDER LITTLE NOTE MAY REVIVE HIS INTEREST!
THE FOLLOWING DAY...
HMM! SO THE LOVELY MADAME NATASHA IS STILL ALIVE AND WANTS TO SEE ME... TO EXPLAIN!
PEPPER, GET ME THE HOTEL PITTSVILLE AT ONCE!
YES, SIR, MISTER STARK!
I'D GET YOU THE MOON IF YOU ASKED ME!
SOON AFTERWARD...
I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH MR. STARK! TELL HIM MADAME NATASHA IS HERE!
I'M SURE HE'S EXPECTING YOU... BUT I'LL RING ANYHOW... JUST IN CASE...
OH, NO! NOT AGAIN! LAST TIME MADAME DARK-EYES WAS HERE, SHE NEARLY SINGED MY PLAYBOY BOSS'S WINGS! BE CAREFUL, TONY DARLING! DON'T TRUST HER... PLEASE!!


HEY, GORGEOUS! ISN'T THAT THE SAME DAME WHO... WHO...
STOP STUTTERING AND PUSH YOUR EYEBALLS BACK, HAPPY! SHE'S OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE!
AND HOW I WISH SHE WAS OUT OF TONY'S LEAGUE, TOO!
AW, BABY! YOU KNOW I ONLY GOT EYES FOR, YOU! WHY DON'TCHA BREAK DOWN AND ADMIT YOU'RE CRAZY ABOUT ME!?
THAT WOULDN'T BE A BREAK-DOWN... IT WOULD BE A COMPLETE NERVOUS COLLAPSE, YOU BIG GORILLA!
WHILE INSIDE...
IT IS SO GOOD OF YOU TO SEE ME!... I FEEL SO ASHAMED... TO THINK I ONCE TRIED TO HARM YOU...
THERE, THERE! I DON'T MAKE A PRACTICE OF HARBORING GRUDGES! THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU REALIZE YOUR MISTAKE.. WE ALL MAKE THEM!
SPEAKING OF MISTAKES, I MADE A LULU MYSELF, THE OTHER DAY! PERHAPS YOU READ OF IT?
WHY, NO... WHAT?
AND SO IT SEEMS THAT TONY STARK, BRILLIANT SCIENTIST AND MAN OF ACTION, ISN'T THE FIRST TO BE TAKEN IN BY A PAIR OF LIMPID EYES...
IT'S MY NEW ANTI-GRAVITY RAY! I WAS FOOL ENOUGH TO LET THE WORLD KNOW ABOUT IT TOO SOON! FOR EVEN I CAN'T MAKE ANOTHER ONE... I STUMBLED UPON THIS BY ACCIDENT!
THAT LITTLE BOX? IT LOOKS SO SIMPLE! YOU MUST BE JOKING!
STUNG BY THE BLACK WIDOW'S REACTION, TONY STARK DEMONSTRATES...
JOKING? WATCH THIS! THAT STEEL SAFE WEIGHS A TON!
INCREDIBLE! IF I COULD STEAL THAT ANTI-GRAVITY RAY, I COULD WRITE MY OWN TICKET BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN!
SUDDENLY...
OHH... THE STRAIN... ALL THE EXCITEMENT... I FEEL SO DIZZY...
SHE'S FAINTED!
4


HERE...LET ME HELP YOU... WHA...? I CAN'T MOVE!!
THAT SPRAY FROM HER PURSE... SHE'S TRICKED ME!!
THIS PARALYZING GAS WILL RENDER YOU HELPLESS JUST LONG ENOUGH, MY HANDSOME FOOL!
THE NEXT MOMENT, AS THE STRICKEN STARK SLUMPS TO HIS KNEES...
THE ANTI-GRAV RAY!! SHE'S GETTING AWAY WITH IT... AND I'M HELPLESS TO STOP HER... EVEN TO CALL OUT...
IF IT CAN LIFT A SAFE... IT CAN MOVE A WALL... AH! IT IS WORKING!!
CRUNCH!
IT WAS ALMOST TOO EASY!
HOLD IT, LADY! THAT'S A RESTRICTED AREA!
STOP, OR I'LL... HOLY SMOKE!
STAY UP THERE A WHILE, LITTLE MAN AND DO NOT ANNOY ME!
SO, THIS RAY WORKS ON PEOPLE, TOO.. HOW INTERESTING!
MOMENTS LATER...
HMM... MADAME MAN-KILLER HAS BEEN IN THERE WITH MY BOSS LONG ENOUGH! I'LL GET HIM TO SIGN SOME OF THESE LETTERS AND TRY TO GET HIS MIND OFF HER FOR A WHILE!
MR. STARK! BOSS! WHAT HAPPENED??
HE'S SO STILL!! IF..IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM...!! HELP! HELP!!
HAVE NO FEAR, BABY DOLL!! HAPPY IS NEAR! HEY! WHAT'S UP??
HE TOOK ONE LOOK AT YOU, AFTER SEEING THAT BLACK-HAIRED BOMBSHELL, AND THE SHOCK WAS TOO MUCH, EH?
VER-RY FUNNY! NOW GET SOME WATER FOR MR. STARK, YOU BIG GOOP!
I'M OKAY NOW, PEPPER! BUT, WHERE'S MADAME NATASHA?
5.


GONE WITH THE WIND, BOSS! AND GOOD RIDDANCE! SAY! WHAT'S HE DOING UP THERE?
I'LL EXPLAIN LATER! HE'LL DRIFT DOWN AGAIN IN A FEW SECONDS! AS FOR ME... I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO!
I UNDERESTIMATED THE BLACK WIDOW! I KNEW SHE WAS UP TO NO GOOD, BUT I HAD TO PRETEND I TRUSTED HER...TO LEARN WHAT SHE WAS AFTER! I NEVER THOUGHT SHE'D MOVE SO FAST...SO UNEXPECTEDLY!
WELL, SHE WON ROUND ONE FROM TONY STARK...
BUT SHE'LL FIND IRON MAN A TOUGHER FOE TO BEAT! I'LL GIVE MYSELF A SHAKE-DOWN FLIGHT NOW, TO BE SURE I'M IN TOP SHAPE!
AFTER ALL, AS IRON MAN I WAS ABLE TO DEFEAT BOTH HER AND HER PARTNER BORIS...*
* ED. NOTE: TALES OF SUSPENSE #52
"PERHAPS I WAS JUST LUCKY THEN, WHEN THEY SEEMED TO HAVE THE UPPER HAND! BUT, I'M STILL GAME TO TRY AGAIN!"
"AND THIS TIME I WON'T ALLOW HER TO ESCAPE, TO MENACE ME AT SOME FUTURE TIME!"
BORIS IS FINISHED! I'LL LET THE BLACK WIDOW GO...AFTER ALL, SHE IS JUST A WOMAN...AND SUCH A LOVELY ONE!
BUT, CUNNING AND RUTHLESS THOUGH SHE MAY BE, MADAME NATASHA IS A WOMAN, AS IRON MAN HAS SAID...AND, AS SUCH, SHE LOVES PRETTY THINGS! SO...
THOSE JEWELS ARE LOVELY! BEFORE I WORK FOR MY COUNTRY PERHAPS I SHALL DO SOME-THING FOR MYSELF!
LATER, A TRANS-ATLANTIC CALL TO A VERY INTERESTED PARTY...
YES, COMRADE LEADER! I HAVE THE NEW "TOY" YOU'VE READ ABOUT! BUT FIRST I MUST KNOW.. AM I FORGIVEN?
FORGIVEN? OF COURSE! YOU KNOW HOW GENEROUS I AM! HOW SOFT-HEARTED I AM!
QUICK!! IGOR! HAVE THIS CALL TRACED! IT'S THE BLACK WIDOW!!
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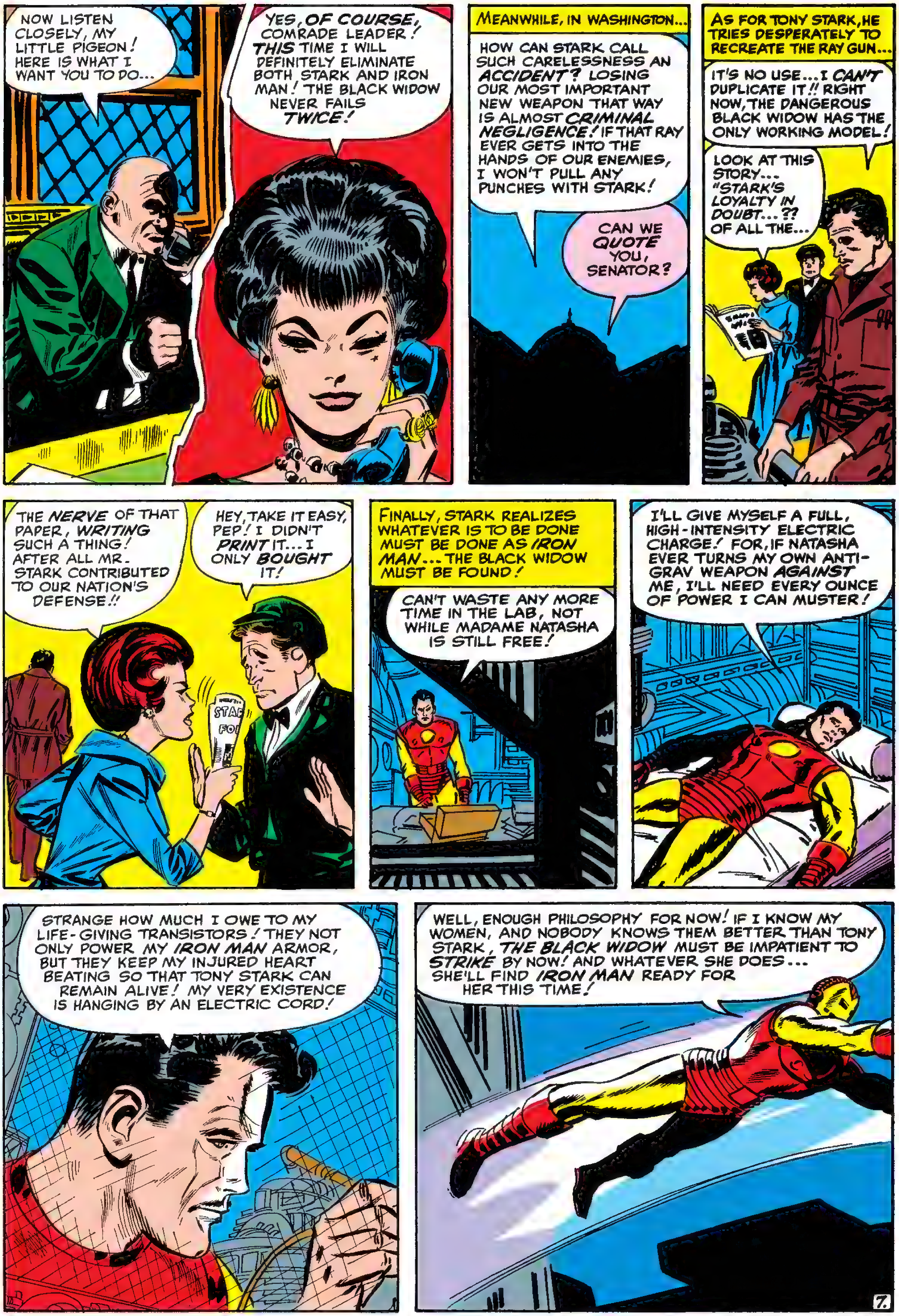
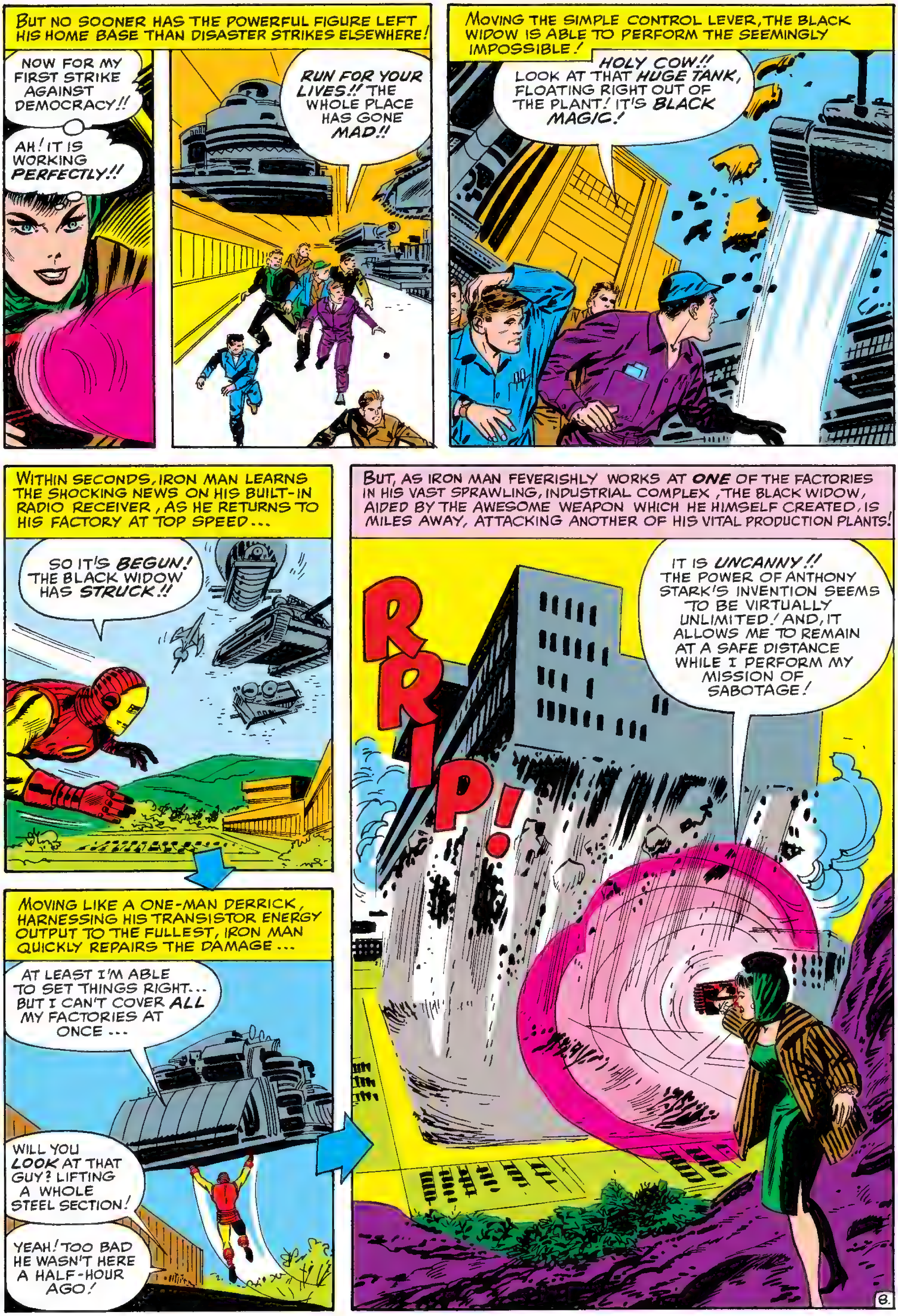
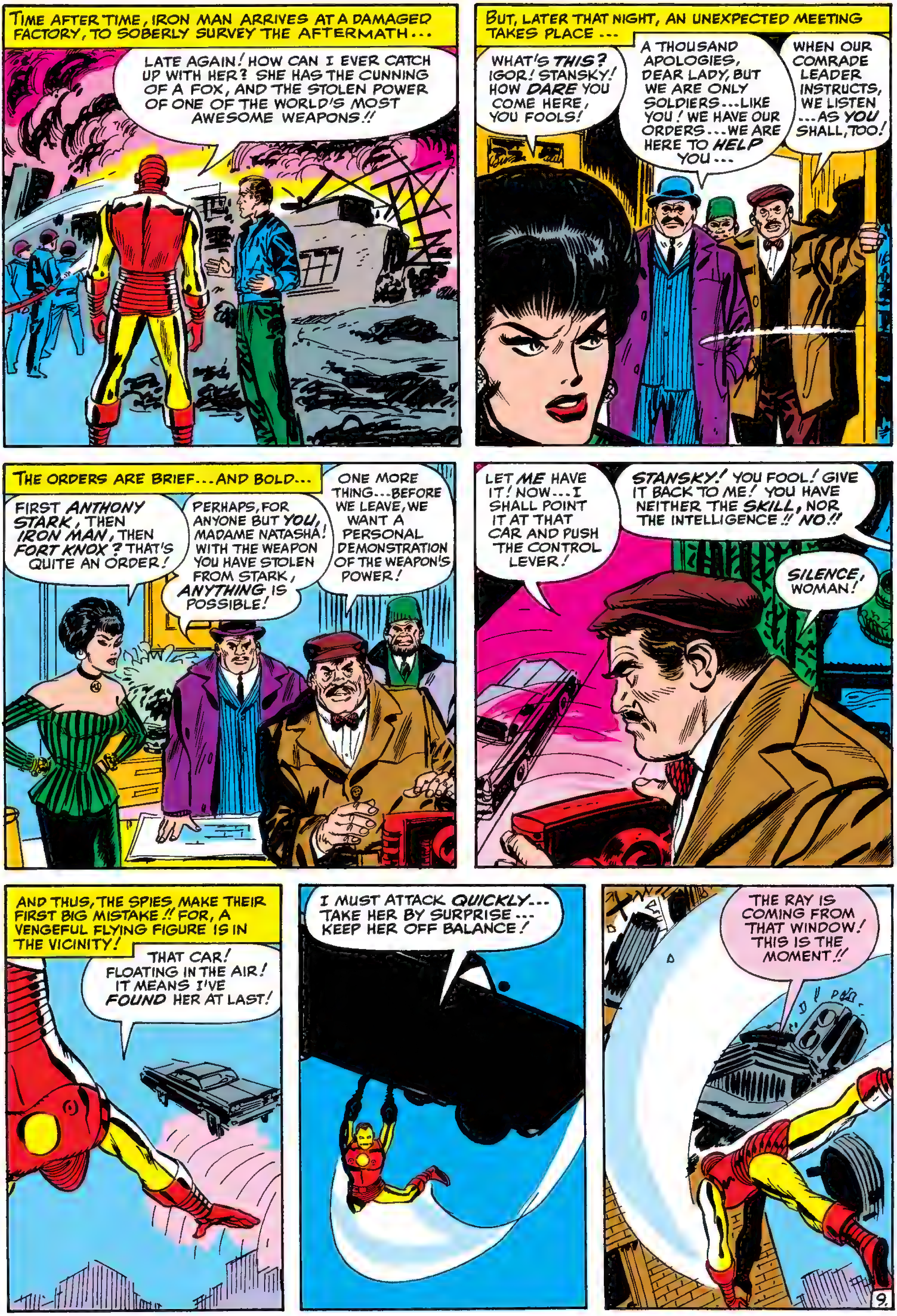
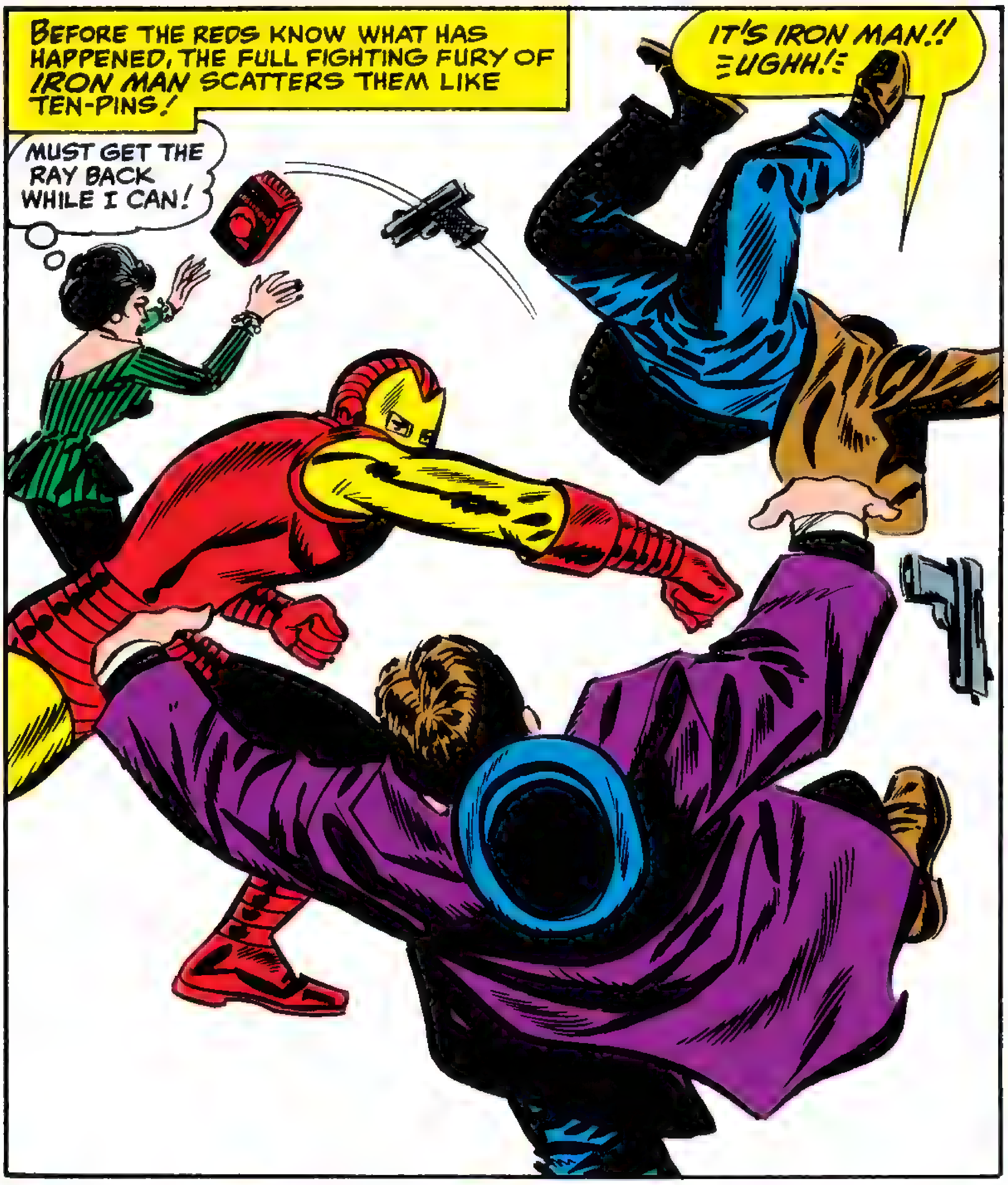
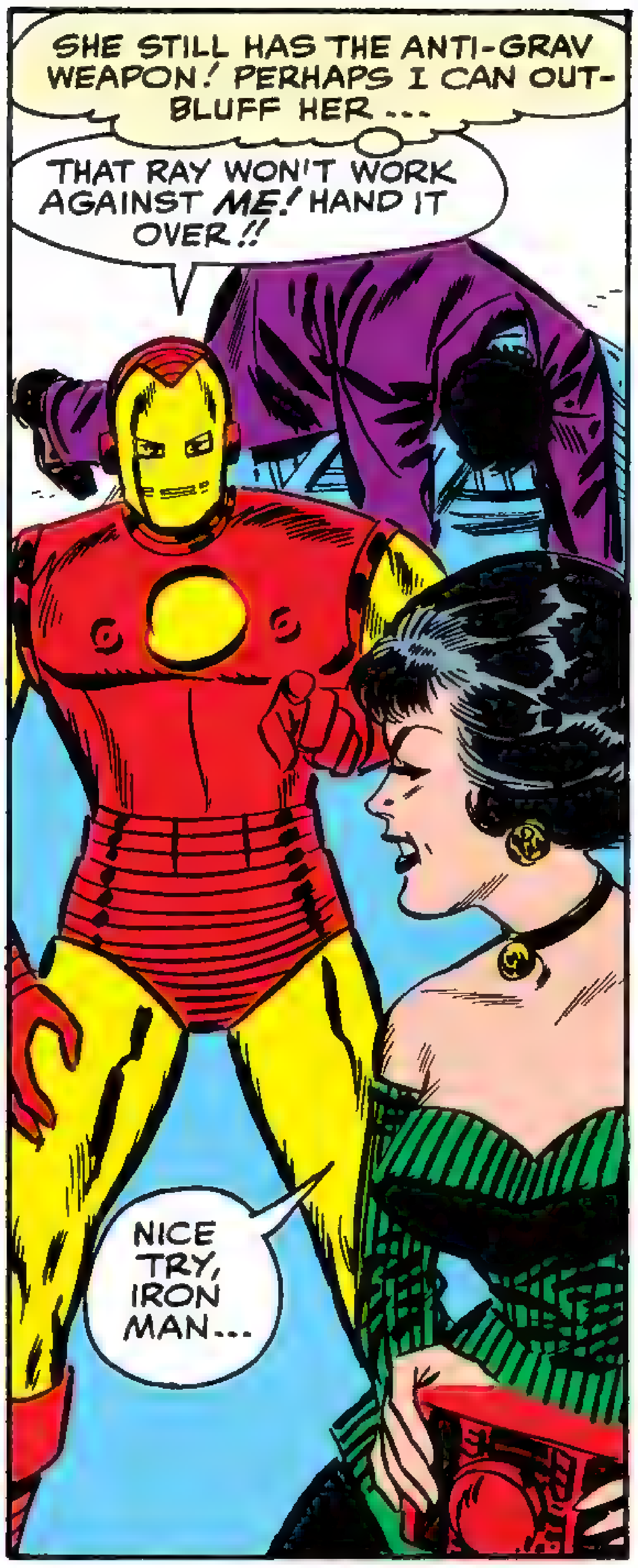
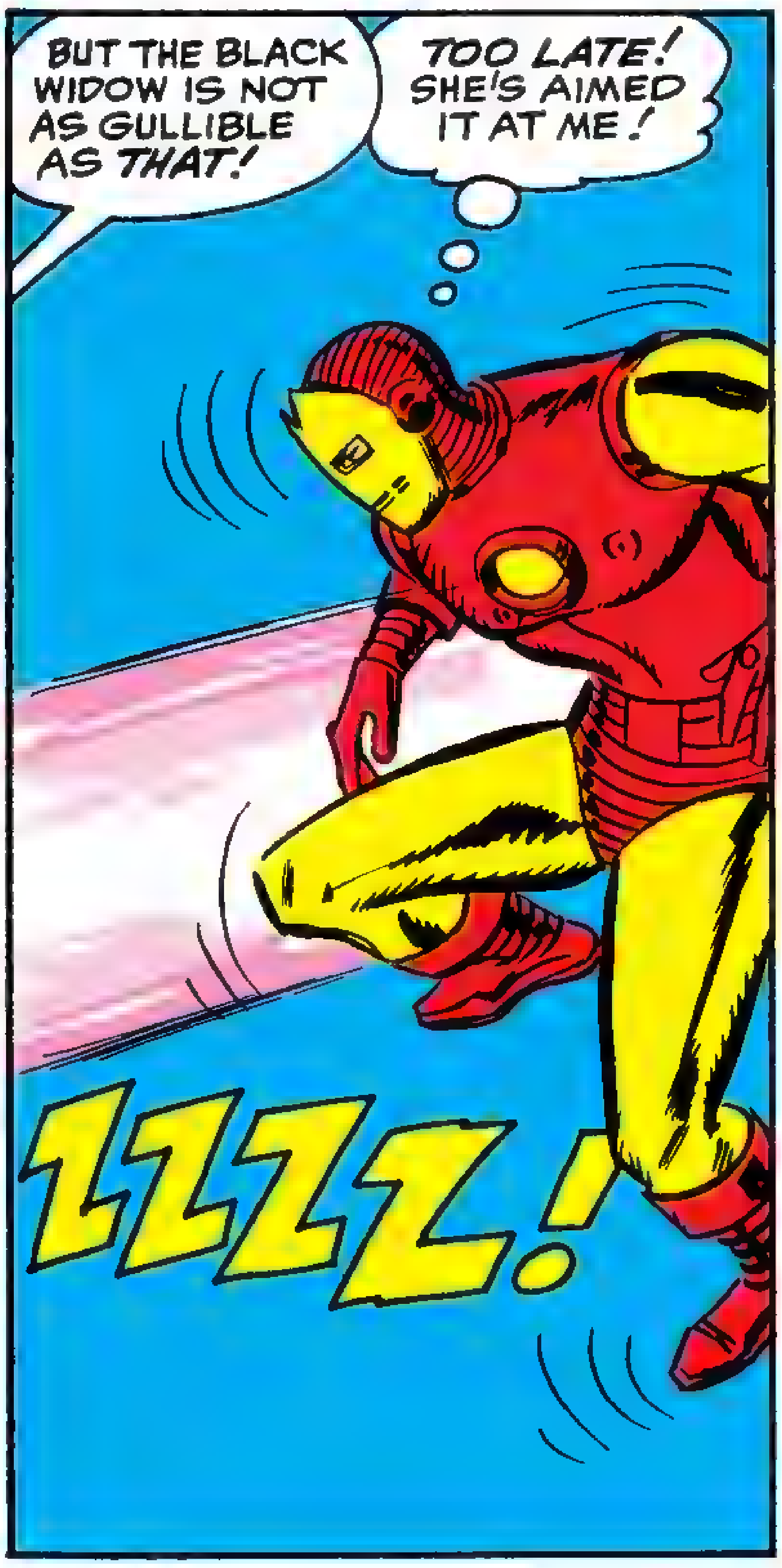

NOW LISTEN CLOSELY, MY LITTLE PIGEON! HERE IS WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO...
YES, OF COURSE, COMRADE LEADER! THIS TIME I WILL DEFINITELY ELIMINATE BOTH STARK AND IRON MAN! THE BLACK WIDOW NEVER FAILS TWICE!
MEANWHILE, IN WASHINGTON...
HOW CAN STARK CALL SUCH CARELESSNESS AN ACCIDENT? LOSING OUR MOST IMPORTANT NEW WEAPON THAT WAY IS ALMOST CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE! IF THAT RAY EVER GETS INTO THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMIES, I WON'T PULL ANY PUNCHES WITH STARK!
CAN WE QUOTE YOU, SENATOR?
AS FOR TONY STARK, HE TRIES DESPERATELY TO RECREATE THE RAY GUN...
IT'S NO USE... I CAN'T DUPLICATE IT!! RIGHT NOW, THE DANGEROUS BLACK WIDOW HAS THE ONLY WORKING MODEL!
LOOK AT THIS STORY... "STARK'S LOYALTY IN DOUBT...?? OF ALL THE...
THE NERVE OF THAT PAPER, WRITING SUCH A THING! AFTER ALL MR. STARK CONTRIBUTED TO OUR NATION'S DEFENSE!!
HEY, TAKE IT EASY, PEP! I DIDN'T PRINT IT... I ONLY BOUGHT IT!
FINALLY, STARK REALIZES WHATEVER IS TO BE DONE MUST BE DONE AS IRON MAN... THE BLACK WIDOW MUST BE FOUND!
CAN'T WASTE ANY MORE TIME IN THE LAB, NOT WHILE MADAME NATASHA IS STILL FREE!
I'LL GIVE MYSELF A FULL, HIGH-INTENSITY ELECTRIC CHARGE! FOR, IF NATASHA EVER TURNS MY OWN ANTI-GRAV WEAPON AGAINST ME, I'LL NEED EVERY OUNCE OF POWER I CAN MUSTER!
STRANGE HOW MUCH I OWE TO MY LIFE-GIVING TRANSISTORS! THEY NOT ONLY POWER MY IRON MAN ARMOR, BUT THEY KEEP MY INJURED HEART BEATING SO THAT TONY STARK CAN REMAIN ALIVE! MY VERY EXISTENCE IS HANGING BY AN ELECTRIC CORD!
WELL, ENOUGH PHILOSOPHY FOR NOW! IF I KNOW MY WOMEN, AND NOBODY KNOWS THEM BETTER THAN TONY STARK, THE BLACK WIDOW MUST BE IMPATIENT TO STRIKE BY NOW! AND WHATEVER SHE DOES... SHE'LL FIND IRON MAN READY FOR HER THIS TIME!

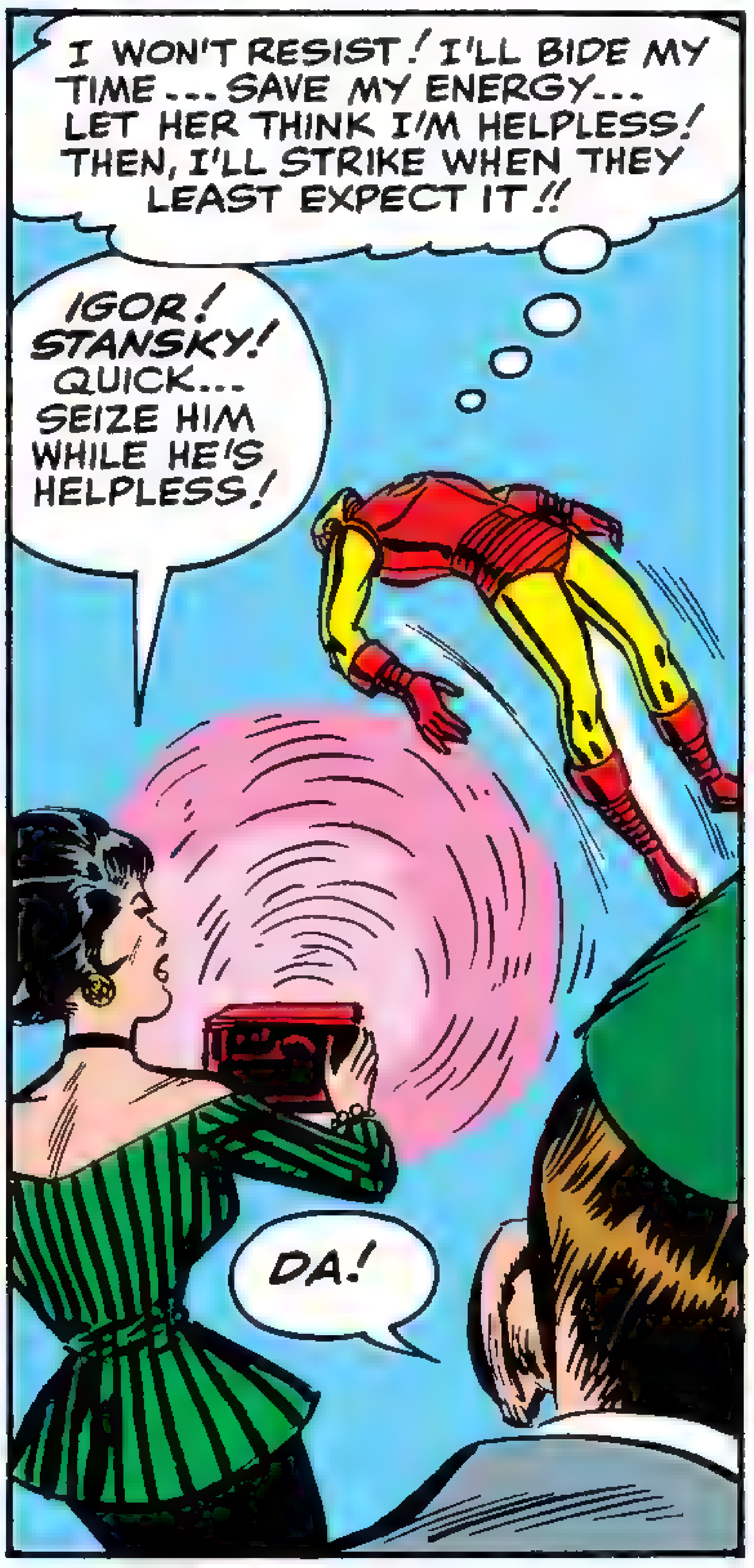

BUT NO SOONER HAS THE POWERFUL FIGURE LEFT HIS HOME BASE THAN DISASTER STRIKES ELSEWHERE!
NOW FOR MY FIRST STRIKE AGAINST DEMOCRACY!!
AH! IT IS WORKING PERFECTLY!!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!! THE WHOLE PLACE HAS GONE MAD!!
MOVING THE SIMPLE CONTROL LEVER, THE BLACK WIDOW IS ABLE TO PERFORM THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE!
HOLY COW!! LOOK AT THAT HUGE TANK, FLOATING RIGHT OUT OF THE PLANT! IT'S BLACK MAGIC!
WITHIN SECONDS, IRON MAN LEARNS THE SHOCKING NEWS ON HIS BUILT-IN RADIO RECEIVER, AS HE RETURNS TO HIS FACTORY AT TOP SPEED...
SO IT'S BEGUN! THE BLACK WIDOW HAS STRUCK!!
MOVING LIKE A ONE-MAN DERRICK, HARNESSING HIS TRANSISTOR ENERGY OUTPUT TO THE FULLEST, IRON MAN QUICKLY REPAIRS THE DAMAGE...
AT LEAST I'M ABLE TO SET THINGS RIGHT... BUT I CAN'T COVER ALL MY FACTORIES AT ONCE...
WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT GUY? LIFTING A WHOLE STEEL SECTION!
YEAH! TOO BAD HE WASN'T HERE A HALF-HOUR AGO!
BUT, AS IRON MAN FEVERISHLY WORKS AT ONE OF THE FACTORIES IN HIS VAST SPRAWLING, INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, THE BLACK WIDOW, AIDED BY THE AWESOME WEAPON WHICH HE HIMSELF CREATED, IS MILES AWAY, ATTACKING ANOTHER OF HIS VITAL PRODUCTION PLANTS!
RRIP!
IT IS UNCANNY!! THE POWER OF ANTHONY STARK'S INVENTION SEEMS TO BE VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED! AND, IT ALLOWS ME TO REMAIN AT A SAFE DISTANCE WHILE I PERFORM MY MISSION OF SABOTAGE!

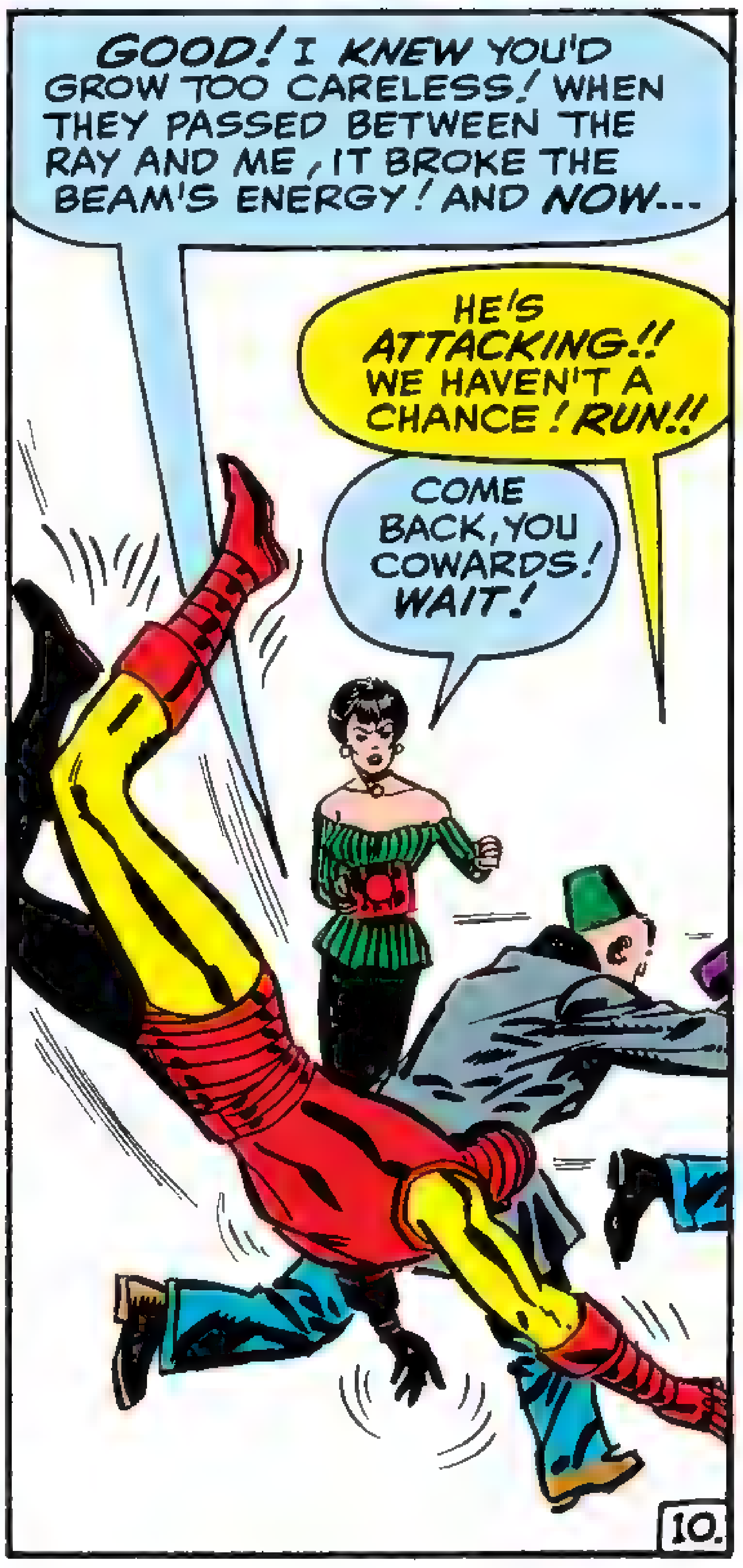

TIME AFTER TIME, IRON MAN ARRIVES AT A DAMAGED FACTORY, TO SOBERLY SURVEY THE AFTERMATH...
LATE AGAIN! HOW CAN I EVER CATCH UP WITH HER? SHE HAS THE CUNNING OF A FOX, AND THE STOLEN POWER OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST AWESOME WEAPONS!!
BUT, LATER THAT NIGHT, AN UNEXPECTED MEETING TAKES PLACE ...
WHAT'S *THIS*? IGOR! STANSKY! HOW *DARE* YOU COME HERE, YOU FOOLS!
A THOUSAND APOLOGIES, DEAR LADY, BUT WE ARE ONLY SOLDIERS...LIKE YOU! WE HAVE OUR ORDERS...WE ARE HERE TO *HELP* YOU...
WHEN OUR COMRADE LEADER INSTRUCTS, WE LISTEN ...AS *YOU* SHALL, TOO!
THE ORDERS ARE BRIEF...AND BOLD...
FIRST *ANTHONY STARK*, THEN *IRON MAN*, THEN *FORT KNOX*? THAT'S QUITE AN ORDER!
PERHAPS, FOR ANYONE BUT *YOU*, MADAME NATASHA! WITH THE WEAPON YOU HAVE STOLEN FROM STARK, *ANYTHING* IS POSSIBLE!
ONE MORE THING...BEFORE WE LEAVE, WE WANT A PERSONAL DEMONSTRATION OF THE WEAPON'S POWER!
LET *ME* HAVE IT! NOW...I SHALL POINT IT AT THAT CAR AND PUSH THE CONTROL LEVER!
STANSKY! YOU FOOL! GIVE IT BACK TO ME! YOU HAVE NEITHER THE *SKILL*, NOR THE INTELLIGENCE!! *NO!!*
SILENCE, WOMAN!
AND THUS, THE SPIES MAKE THEIR FIRST BIG MISTAKE!! FOR, A VENGEFUL FLYING FIGURE IS IN THE VICINITY!
THAT CAR! FLOATING IN THE AIR! IT MEANS I'VE *FOUND* HER AT LAST!
I MUST ATTACK *QUICKLY*... TAKE HER BY SURPRISE ... KEEP HER OFF BALANCE!
THE RAY IS COMING FROM THAT WINDOW! THIS IS THE MOMENT!!

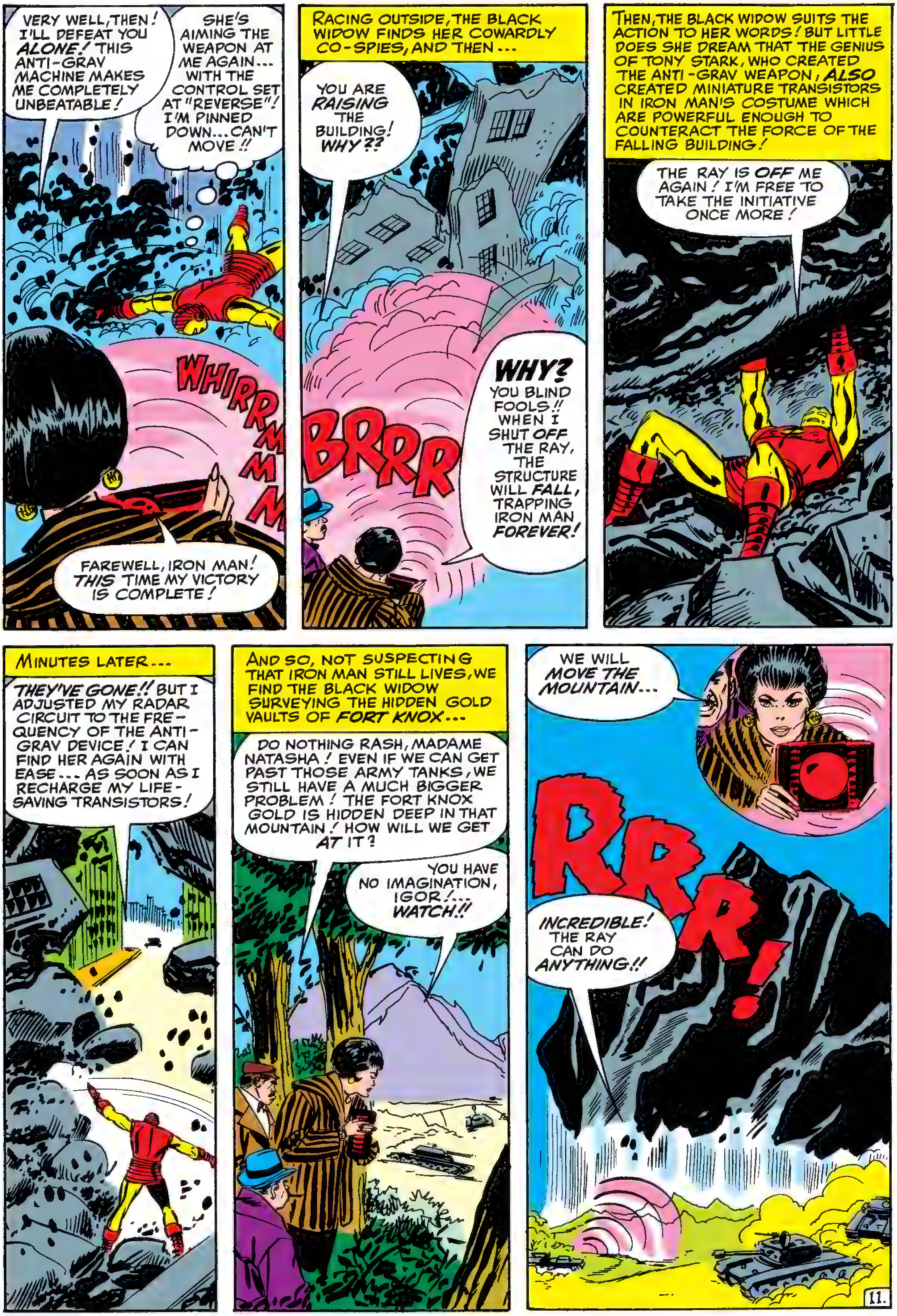

BEFORE THE REDS KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED, THE FULL FIGHTING FURY OF IRON MAN SCATTERS THEM LIKE TEN-PINS!
IT'S IRON MAN!! UGHH!
MUST GET THE RAY BACK WHILE I CAN!

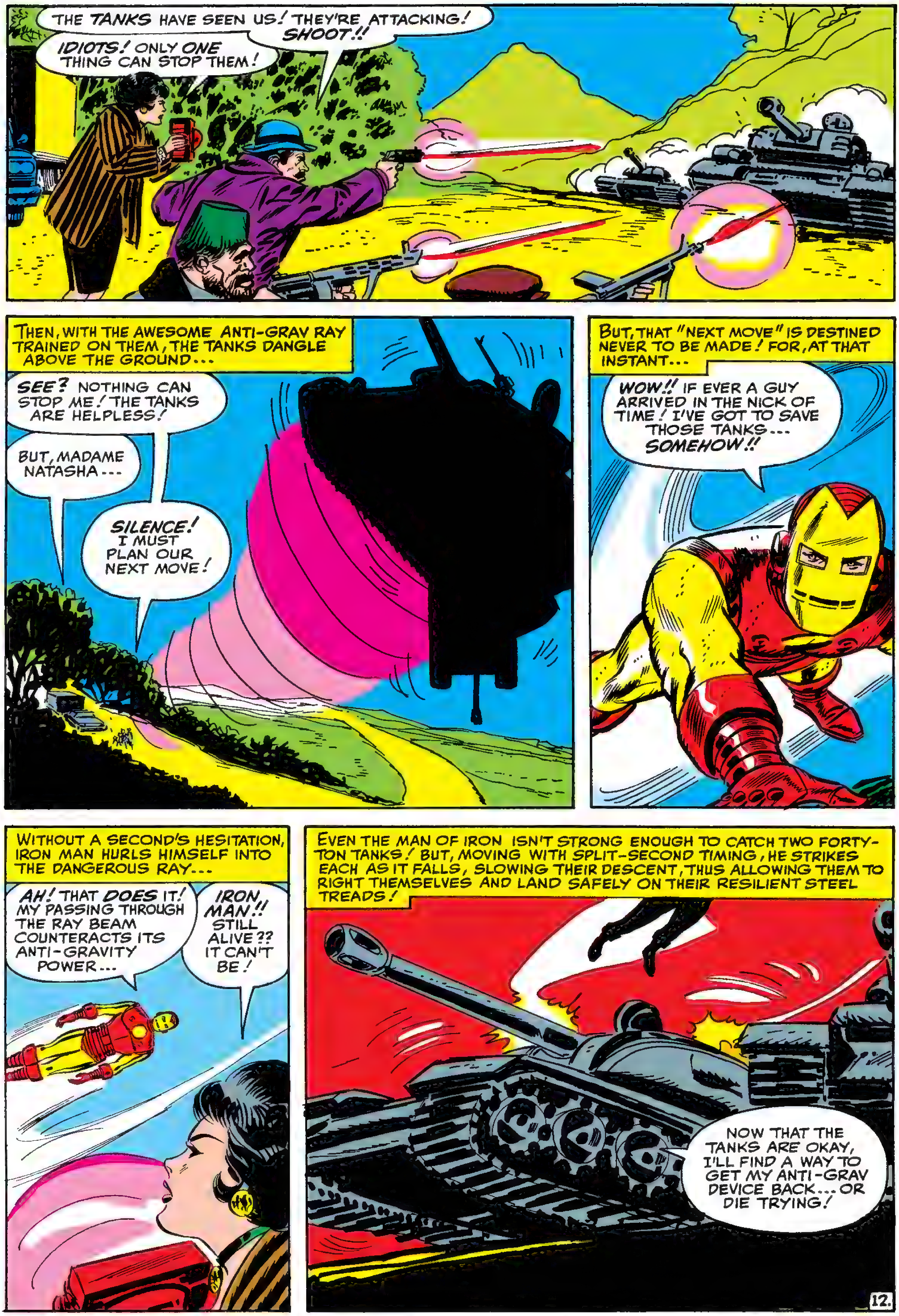

SHE STILL HAS THE ANTI-GRAV WEAPON! PERHAPS I CAN OUT-BLUFF HER...
THAT RAY WON'T WORK AGAINST ME! HAND IT OVER!!
NICE TRY, IRON MAN...

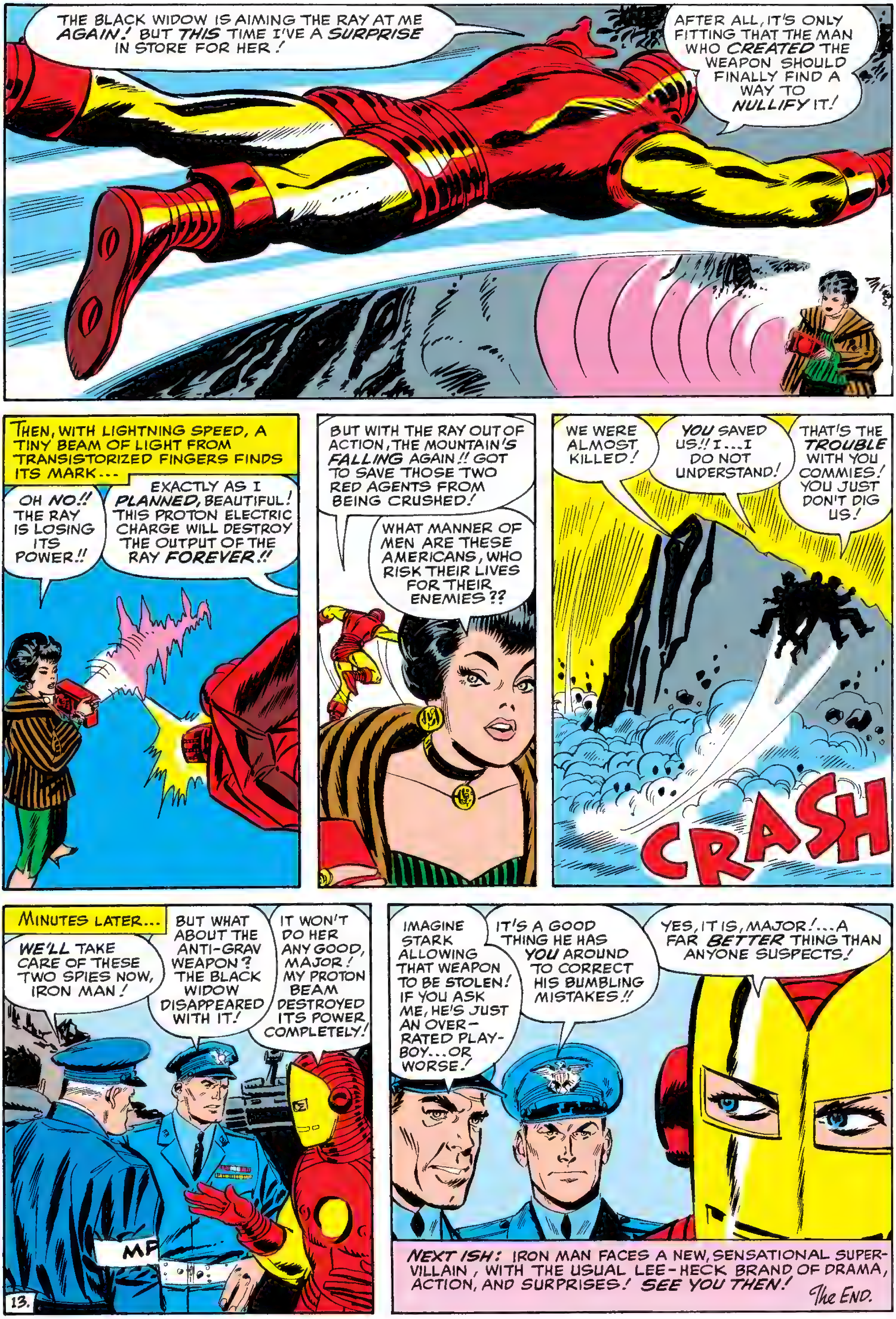

BUT THE BLACK WIDOW IS NOT AS GULLIBLE AS THAT!
TOO LATE! SHE'S AIMED IT AT ME!
ZZZZ!


I WON'T RESIST! I'LL BIDE MY TIME... SAVE MY ENERGY... LET HER THINK I'M HELPLESS! THEN, I'LL STRIKE WHEN THEY LEAST EXPECT IT!!
IGOR! STANSKY! QUICK... SEIZE HIM WHILE HE'S HELPLESS!
DA!

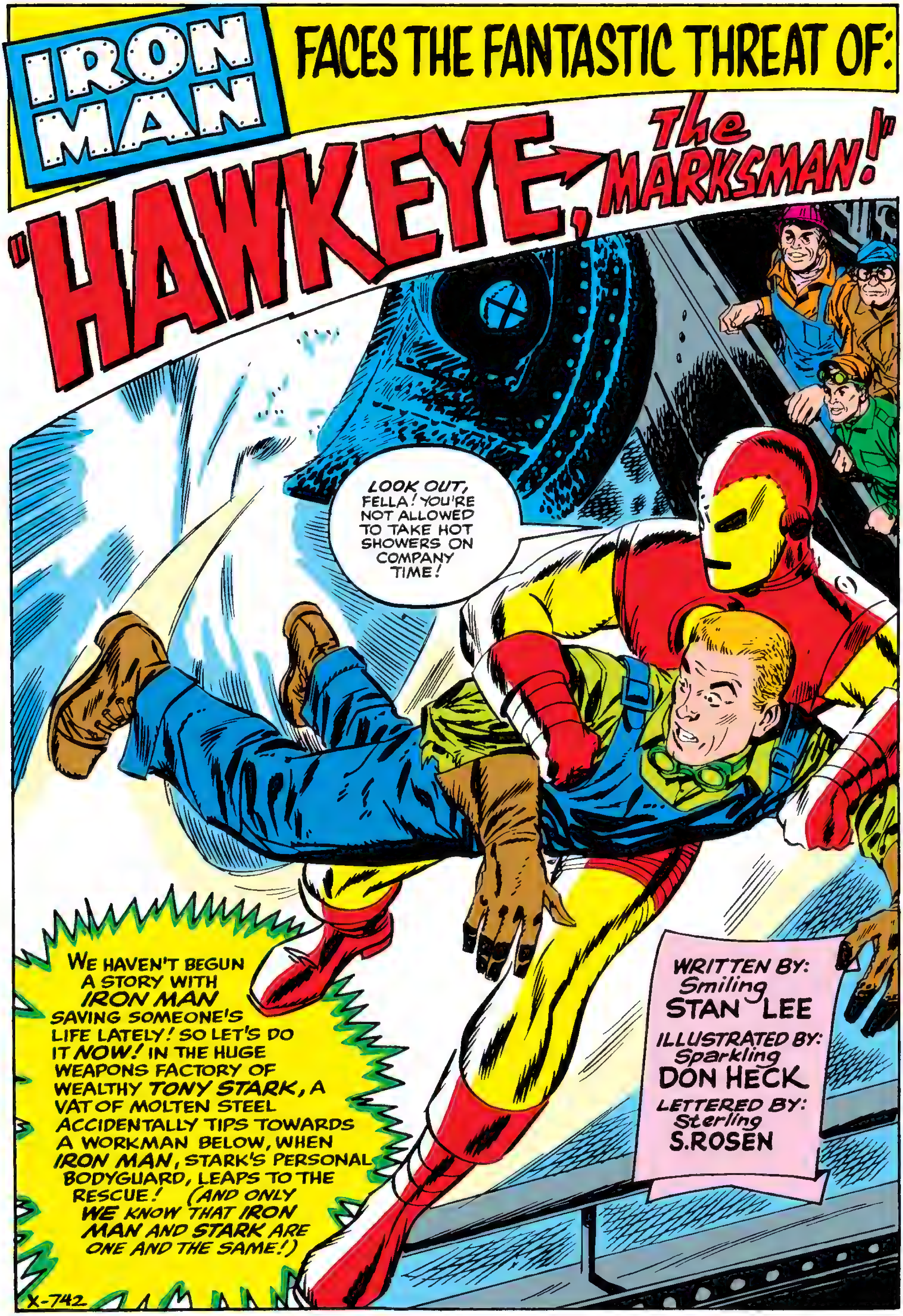

GOOD! I KNEW YOU'D GROW TOO CARELESS! WHEN THEY PASSED BETWEEN THE RAY AND ME, IT BROKE THE BEAM'S ENERGY! AND NOW...
HE'S ATTACKING!! WE HAVEN'T A CHANCE! RUN!!
COME BACK, YOU COWARDS! WAIT!

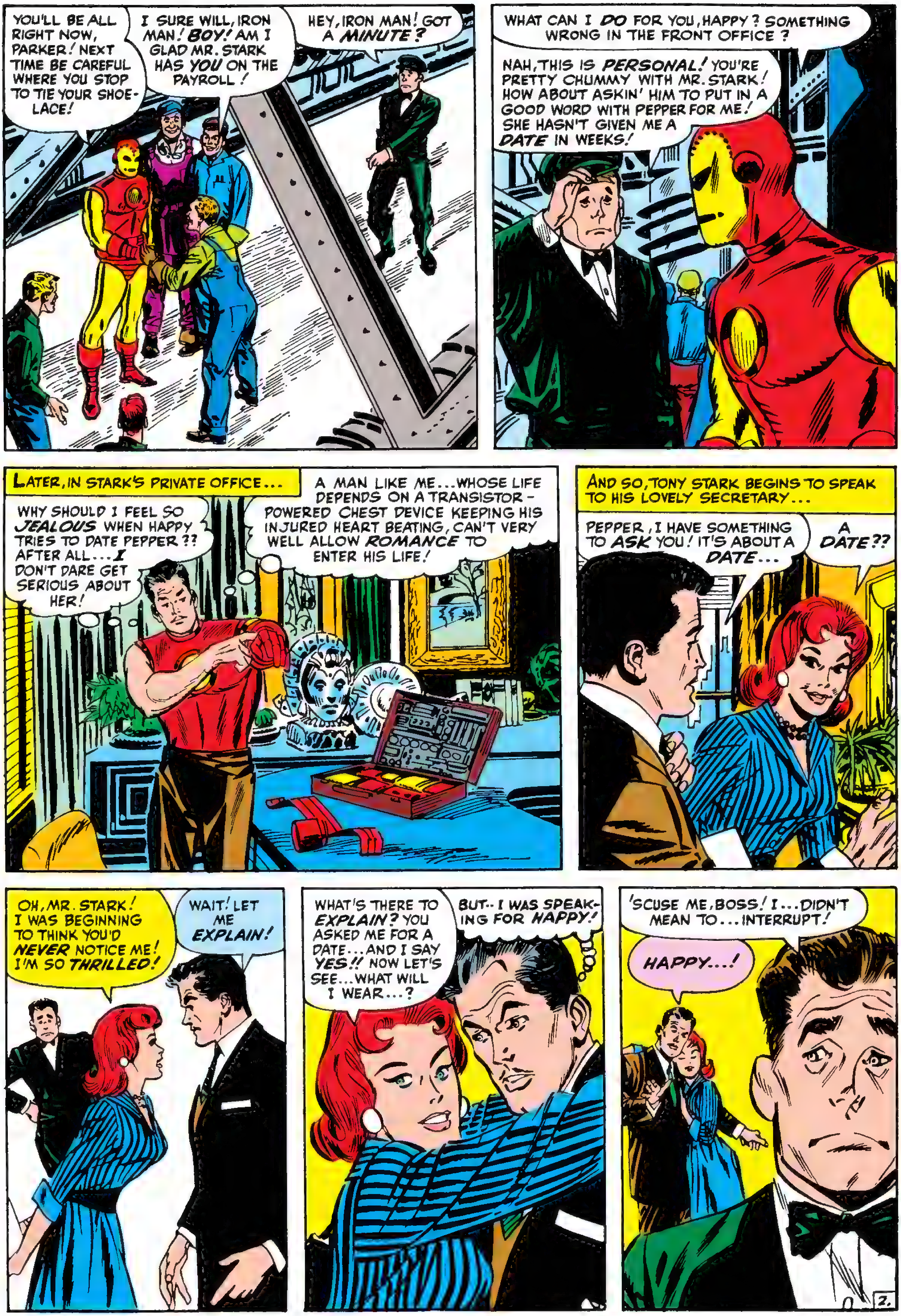

VERY WELL, THEN! I'LL DEFEAT YOU ALONE! THIS ANTI-GRAV MACHINE MAKES ME COMPLETELY UNBEATABLE!
SHE'S AIMING THE WEAPON AT ME AGAIN... WITH THE CONTROL SET AT "REVERSE"! I'M PINNED DOWN... CAN'T MOVE!!
WHIRRMMMM
FAREWELL, IRON MAN! THIS TIME MY VICTORY IS COMPLETE!
RACING OUTSIDE, THE BLACK WIDOW FINDS HER COWARDLY CO-SPIES, AND THEN...
YOU ARE RAISING THE BUILDING! WHY??
BRRRR
WHY? YOU BLIND FOOLS!! WHEN I SHUT OFF THE RAY, THE STRUCTURE WILL FALL, TRAPPING IRON MAN FOREVER!
THEN, THE BLACK WIDOW SUITS THE ACTION TO HER WORDS! BUT LITTLE DOES SHE DREAM THAT THE GENIUS OF TONY STARK, WHO CREATED THE ANTI-GRAV WEAPON, ALSO CREATED MINIATURE TRANSISTORS IN IRON MAN'S COSTUME WHICH ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COUNTERACT THE FORCE OF THE FALLING BUILDING!
THE RAY IS OFF ME AGAIN! I'M FREE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE ONCE MORE!
MINUTES LATER...
THEY'VE GONE!! BUT I ADJUSTED MY RADAR CIRCUIT TO THE FREQUENCY OF THE ANTI-GRAV DEVICE! I CAN FIND HER AGAIN WITH EASE... AS SOON AS I RECHARGE MY LIFE-SAVING TRANSISTORS!
AND SO, NOT SUSPECTING THAT IRON MAN STILL LIVES, WE FIND THE BLACK WIDOW SURVEYING THE HIDDEN GOLD VAULTS OF FORT KNOX...
DO NOTHING RASH, MADAME NATASHA! EVEN IF WE CAN GET PAST THOSE ARMY TANKS, WE STILL HAVE A MUCH BIGGER PROBLEM! THE FORT KNOX GOLD IS HIDDEN DEEP IN THAT MOUNTAIN! HOW WILL WE GET AT IT?
YOU HAVE NO IMAGINATION, IGOR!... WATCH!!
WE WILL MOVE THE MOUNTAIN...
RRR!
INCREDIBLE! THE RAY CAN DO ANYTHING!!

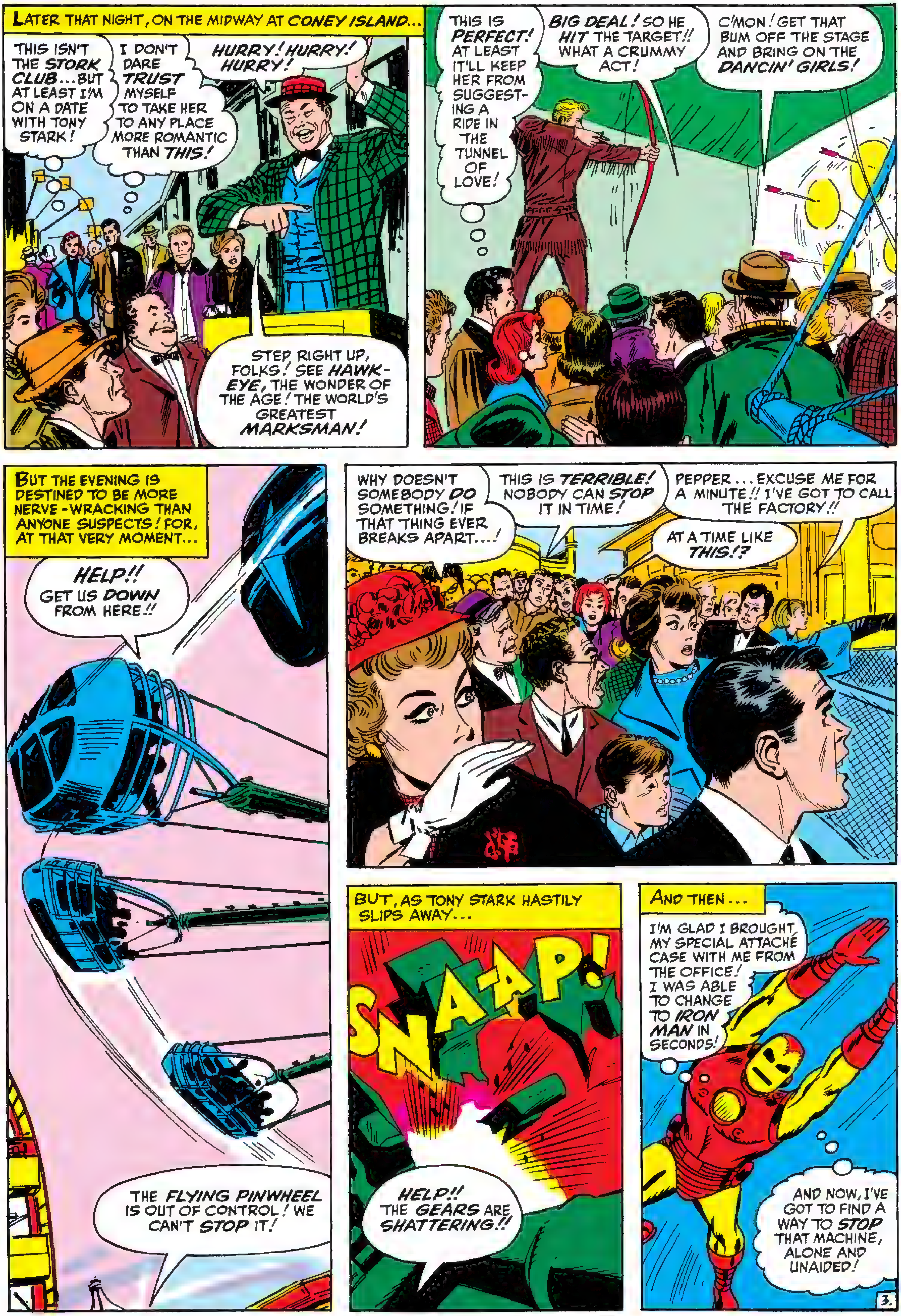

THE *TANKS* HAVE SEEN US! THEY'RE ATTACKING! *SHOOT!!*
IDIOTS! ONLY *ONE* THING CAN STOP THEM!
THEN, WITH THE AWESOME ANTI-GRAV RAY TRAINED ON THEM, THE TANKS DANGLE ABOVE THE GROUND...
SEE? NOTHING CAN STOP ME! THE TANKS ARE HELPLESS!
BUT, MADAME NATASHA...
SILENCE! I MUST PLAN OUR NEXT MOVE!
BUT, THAT "NEXT MOVE" IS DESTINED NEVER TO BE MADE! FOR, AT THAT INSTANT...
WOW!! IF EVER A GUY ARRIVED IN THE NICK OF TIME! I'VE GOT TO SAVE THOSE TANKS... *SOMEHOW!!*
WITHOUT A SECOND'S HESITATION, IRON MAN HURLS HIMSELF INTO THE DANGEROUS RAY...
AH! THAT *DOES* IT! MY PASSING THROUGH THE RAY BEAM COUNTERACTS ITS ANTI-GRAVITY POWER...
IRON MAN!! STILL ALIVE?? IT CAN'T BE!
EVEN THE MAN OF IRON ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO CATCH TWO FORTY-TON TANKS! BUT, MOVING WITH SPLIT-SECOND TIMING, HE STRIKES EACH AS IT FALLS, SLOWING THEIR DESCENT, THUS ALLOWING THEM TO RIGHT THEMSELVES AND LAND SAFELY ON THEIR RESILIENT STEEL TREADS!
NOW THAT THE TANKS ARE OKAY, I'LL FIND A WAY TO GET MY ANTI-GRAV DEVICE BACK... OR DIE TRYING!

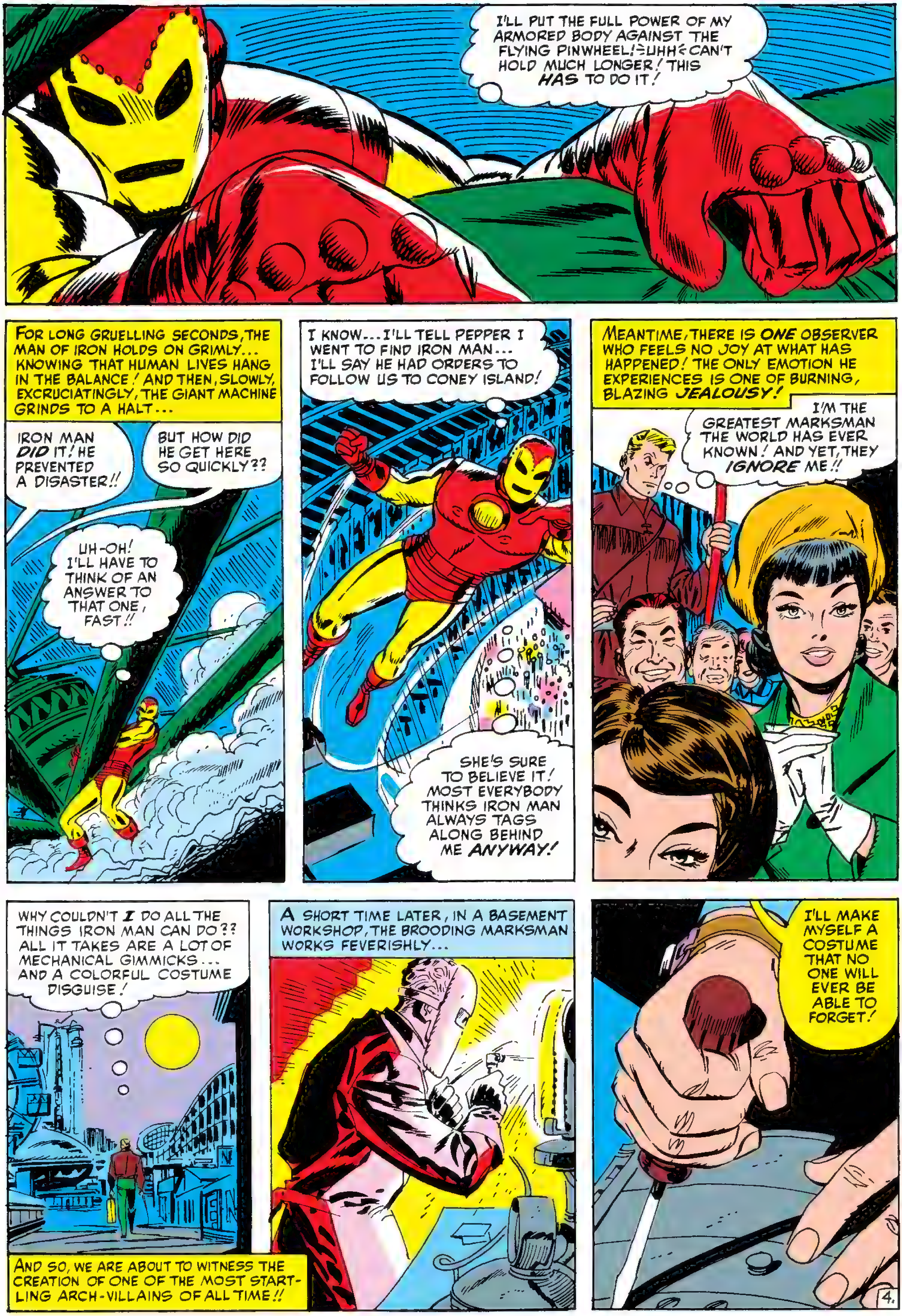

THE BLACK WIDOW IS AIMING THE RAY AT ME AGAIN! BUT THIS TIME I'VE A SURPRISE IN STORE FOR HER!
AFTER ALL, IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT THE MAN WHO CREATED THE WEAPON SHOULD FINALLY FIND A WAY TO NULLIFY IT!
THEN, WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, A TINY BEAM OF LIGHT FROM TRANSISTORIZED FINGERS FINDS ITS MARK...
OH NO!! THE RAY IS LOSING ITS POWER!!
EXACTLY AS I PLANNED, BEAUTIFUL! THIS PROTON ELECTRIC CHARGE WILL DESTROY THE OUTPUT OF THE RAY FOREVER!!
BUT WITH THE RAY OUT OF ACTION, THE MOUNTAIN'S FALLING AGAIN!! GOT TO SAVE THOSE TWO RED AGENTS FROM BEING CRUSHED!
WHAT MANNER OF MEN ARE THESE AMERICANS, WHO RISK THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR ENEMIES??
WE WERE ALMOST KILLED!
YOU SAVED US!! I...I DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU COMMIES! YOU JUST DON'T DIG US!
CRASH
MINUTES LATER...
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE TWO SPIES NOW, IRON MAN!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ANTI-GRAV WEAPON? THE BLACK WIDOW DISAPPEARED WITH IT!
IT WON'T DO HER ANY GOOD, MAJOR! MY PROTON BEAM DESTROYED ITS POWER COMPLETELY!
MP
13.
IMAGINE STARK ALLOWING THAT WEAPON TO BE STOLEN! IF YOU ASK ME, HE'S JUST AN OVER-RATED PLAY-BOY...OR WORSE!
IT'S A GOOD THING HE HAS YOU AROUND TO CORRECT HIS BUMBLING MISTAKES!!
YES, IT IS, MAJOR!...A FAR BETTER THING THAN ANYONE SUSPECTS!
NEXT ISH: IRON MAN FACES A NEW, SENSATIONAL SUPER-VILLAIN, WITH THE USUAL LEE-HECK BRAND OF DRAMA, ACTION, AND SURPRISES! SEE YOU THEN!
The END.

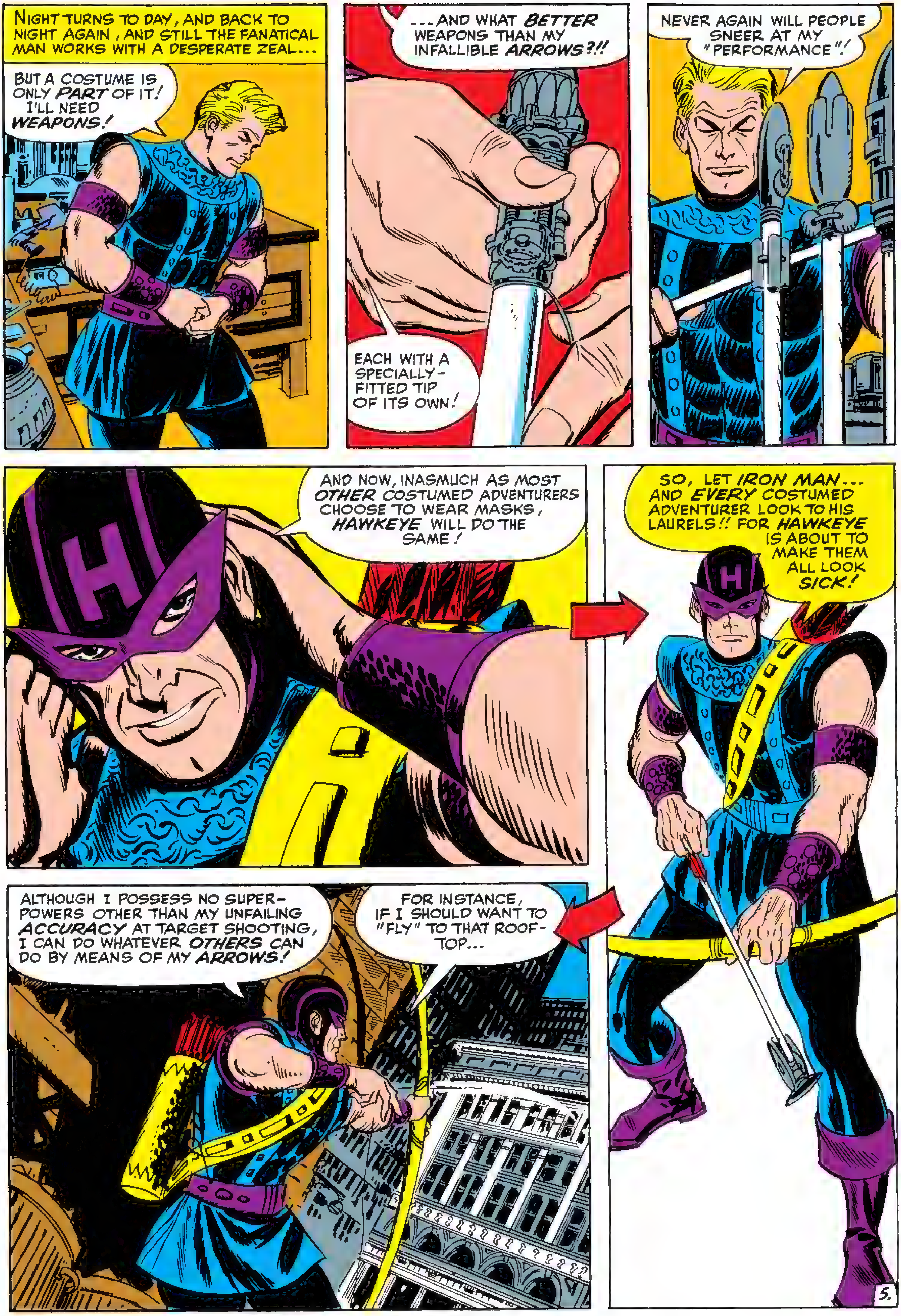
TALES OF SUSPENSE
featuring
THE POWER OF
IRON MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
57 SEPT
HOW CAN ONE MAN WITH A STRANGE BOW AND ARROW HARM OL' SHELL-HEAD? DON'T TRY TO ANSWER TILL YOU'VE SEEN THE SENSATIONAL HAWKEYE→
WE THINK HAWKEYE IS SO TERRIFIC, WE PLASTERED HIM ALL OVER OUR COVER!!
WATCH THE SPARKS FLY WHEN HANDSOME Hawkeye TEAMS UP WITH THE BLACK WIDOW!

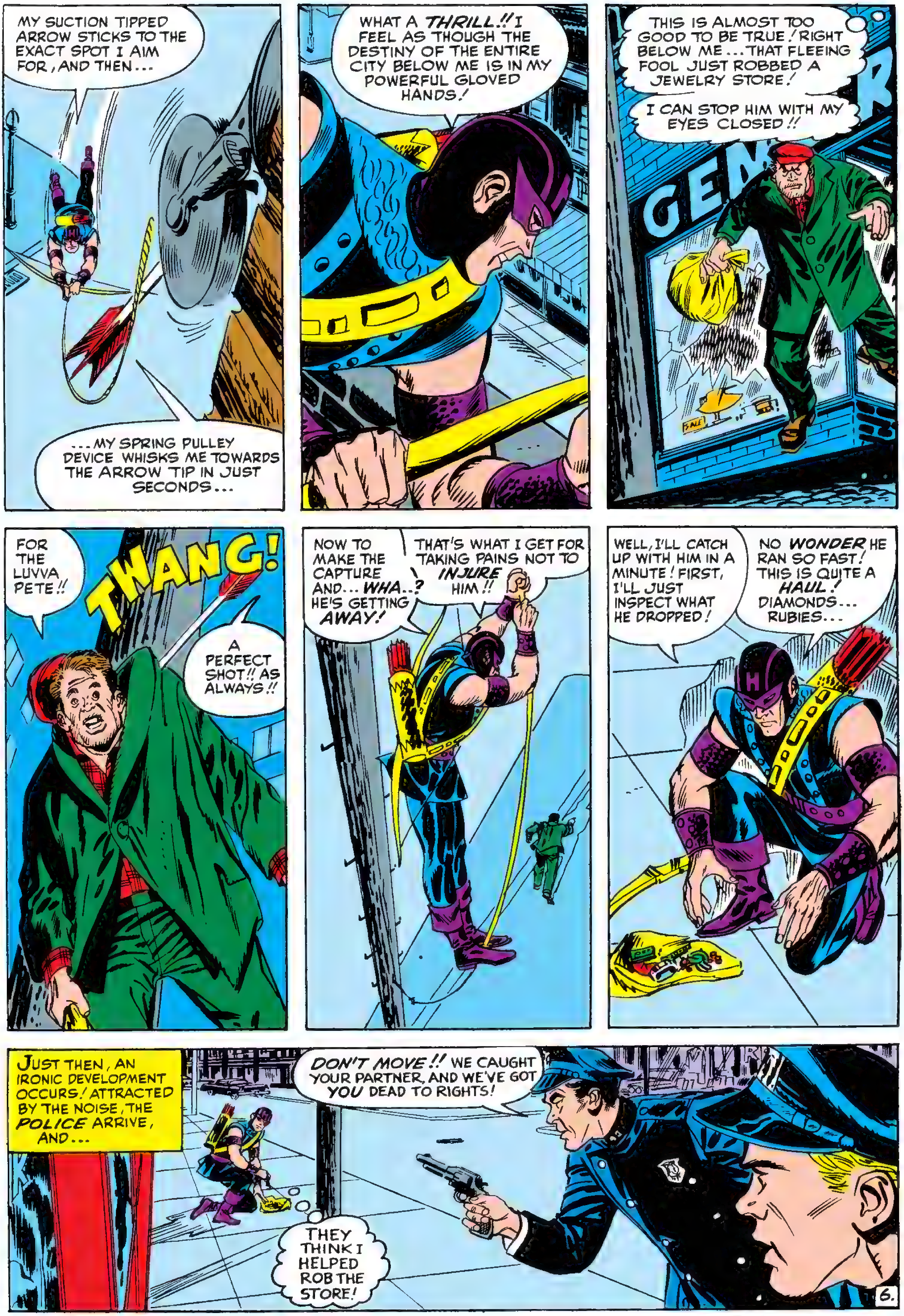

IRON MAN
FACES THE FANTASTIC THREAT OF:
"HAWKEYE, the MARKSMAN!"
LOOK OUT, FELLA! YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE HOT SHOWERS ON COMPANY TIME!
WE HAVEN'T BEGUN A STORY WITH *IRON MAN* SAVING SOMEONE'S LIFE LATELY! SO LET'S DO IT *NOW!* IN THE HUGE WEAPONS FACTORY OF WEALTHY *TONY STARK*, A VAT OF MOLTEN STEEL ACCIDENTALLY TIPS TOWARDS A WORKMAN BELOW, WHEN *IRON MAN*, STARK'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, LEAPS TO THE RESCUE! *(AND ONLY WE KNOW THAT IRON MAN AND STARK ARE ONE AND THE SAME!)*
WRITTEN BY: Smiling STAN LEE
ILLUSTRATED BY: Sparkling DON HECK
LETTERED BY: Sterling S.ROSEN
X-742

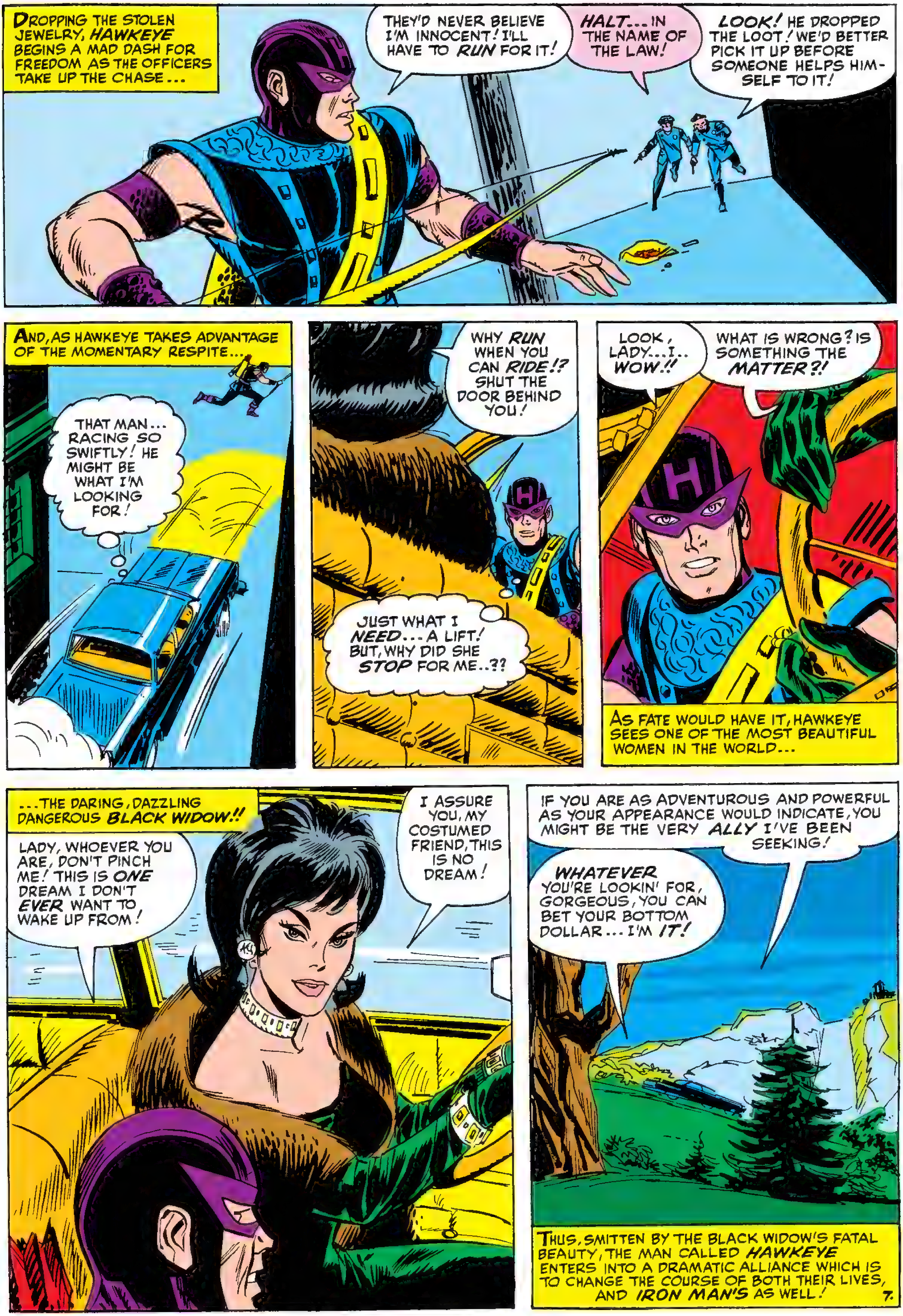

YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT NOW, PARKER! NEXT TIME BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU STOP TO TIE YOUR SHOELACE!
I SURE WILL, IRON MAN! BOY! AM I GLAD MR. STARK HAS YOU ON THE PAYROLL!
HEY, IRON MAN! GOT A MINUTE?
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, HAPPY? SOMETHING WRONG IN THE FRONT OFFICE?
NAH, THIS IS PERSONAL! YOU'RE PRETTY CHUMMY WITH MR. STARK! HOW ABOUT ASKIN' HIM TO PUT IN A GOOD WORD WITH PEPPER FOR ME! SHE HASN'T GIVEN ME A DATE IN WEEKS!
LATER, IN STARK'S PRIVATE OFFICE...
WHY SHOULD I FEEL SO JEALOUS WHEN HAPPY TRIES TO DATE PEPPER?? AFTER ALL... I DON'T DARE GET SERIOUS ABOUT HER!
A MAN LIKE ME... WHOSE LIFE DEPENDS ON A TRANSISTOR-POWERED CHEST DEVICE KEEPING HIS INJURED HEART BEATING, CAN'T VERY WELL ALLOW ROMANCE TO ENTER HIS LIFE!
AND SO, TONY STARK BEGINS TO SPEAK TO HIS LOVELY SECRETARY...
PEPPER, I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK YOU! IT'S ABOUT A DATE...
A DATE??
OH, MR. STARK! I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU'D NEVER NOTICE ME! I'M SO THRILLED!
WAIT! LET ME EXPLAIN!
WHAT'S THERE TO EXPLAIN? YOU ASKED ME FOR A DATE... AND I SAY YES!! NOW LET'S SEE... WHAT WILL I WEAR...?
BUT.. I WAS SPEAKING FOR HAPPY!
'SCUSE ME, BOSS! I... DIDN'T MEAN TO... INTERRUPT!
HAPPY...!

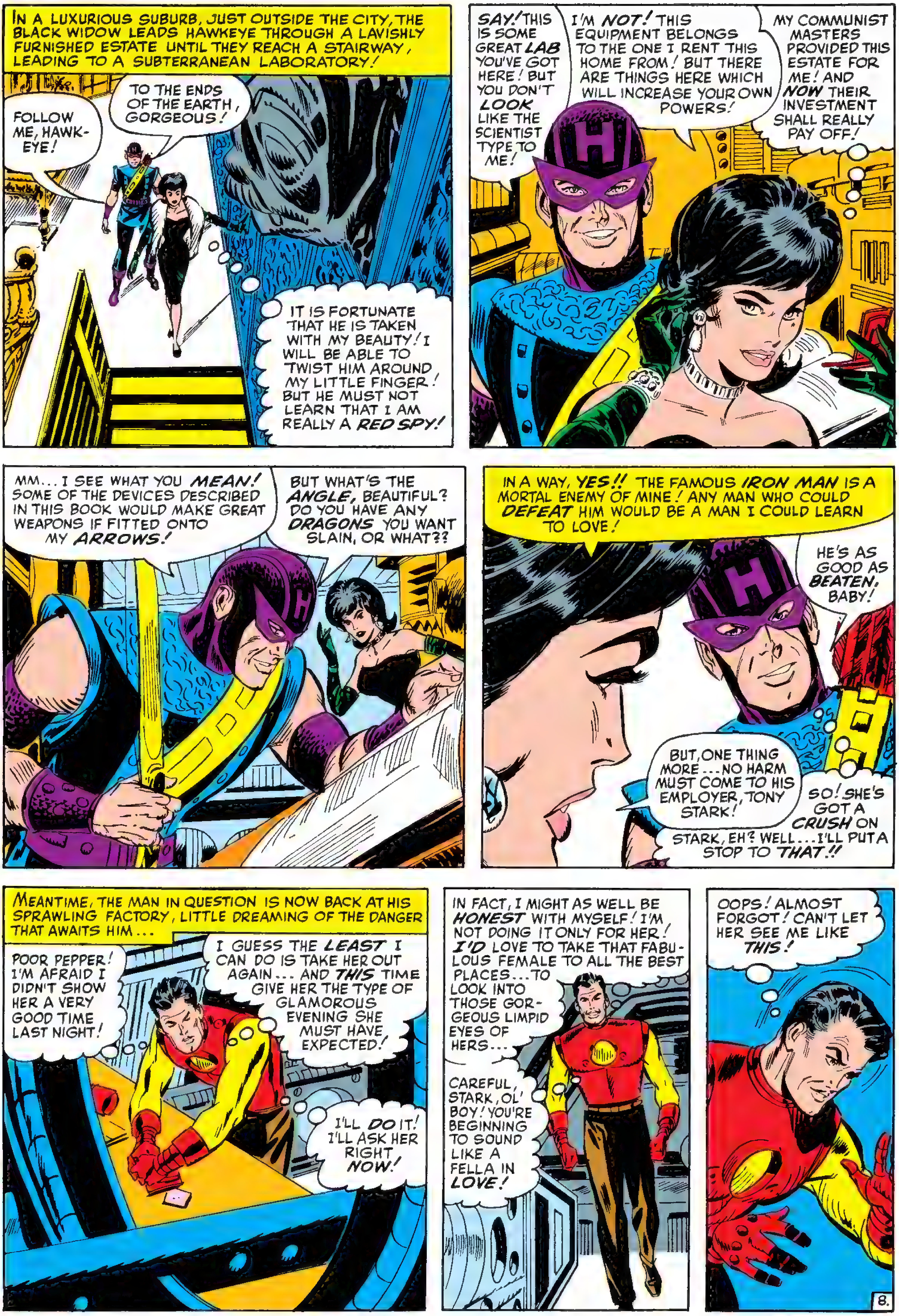

LATER THAT NIGHT, ON THE MIDWAY AT CONEY ISLAND...
THIS ISN'T THE STORK CLUB...BUT AT LEAST I'M ON A DATE WITH TONY STARK!
I DON'T DARE TRUST MYSELF TO TAKE HER TO ANY PLACE MORE ROMANTIC THAN THIS!
HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!
STEP RIGHT UP, FOLKS! SEE HAWK-EYE, THE WONDER OF THE AGE! THE WORLD'S GREATEST MARKSMAN!
THIS IS PERFECT! AT LEAST IT'LL KEEP HER FROM SUGGESTING A RIDE IN THE TUNNEL OF LOVE!
BIG DEAL! SO HE HIT THE TARGET!! WHAT A CRUMMY ACT!
C'MON! GET THAT BUM OFF THE STAGE AND BRING ON THE DANCIN' GIRLS!
BUT THE EVENING IS DESTINED TO BE MORE NERVE-WRACKING THAN ANYONE SUSPECTS! FOR, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
HELP!! GET US DOWN FROM HERE!!
THE FLYING PINWHEEL IS OUT OF CONTROL! WE CAN'T STOP IT!
WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING! IF THAT THING EVER BREAKS APART...!
THIS IS TERRIBLE! NOBODY CAN STOP IT IN TIME!
PEPPER... EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE!! I'VE GOT TO CALL THE FACTORY!!
AT A TIME LIKE THIS!?
BUT, AS TONY STARK HASTILY SLIPS AWAY...
SNA-A-AP!
HELP!! THE GEARS ARE SHATTERING!!
AND THEN...
I'M GLAD I BROUGHT MY SPECIAL ATTACHÉ CASE WITH ME FROM THE OFFICE! I WAS ABLE TO CHANGE TO IRON MAN IN SECONDS!
AND NOW, I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THAT MACHINE, ALONE AND UNAIDED!

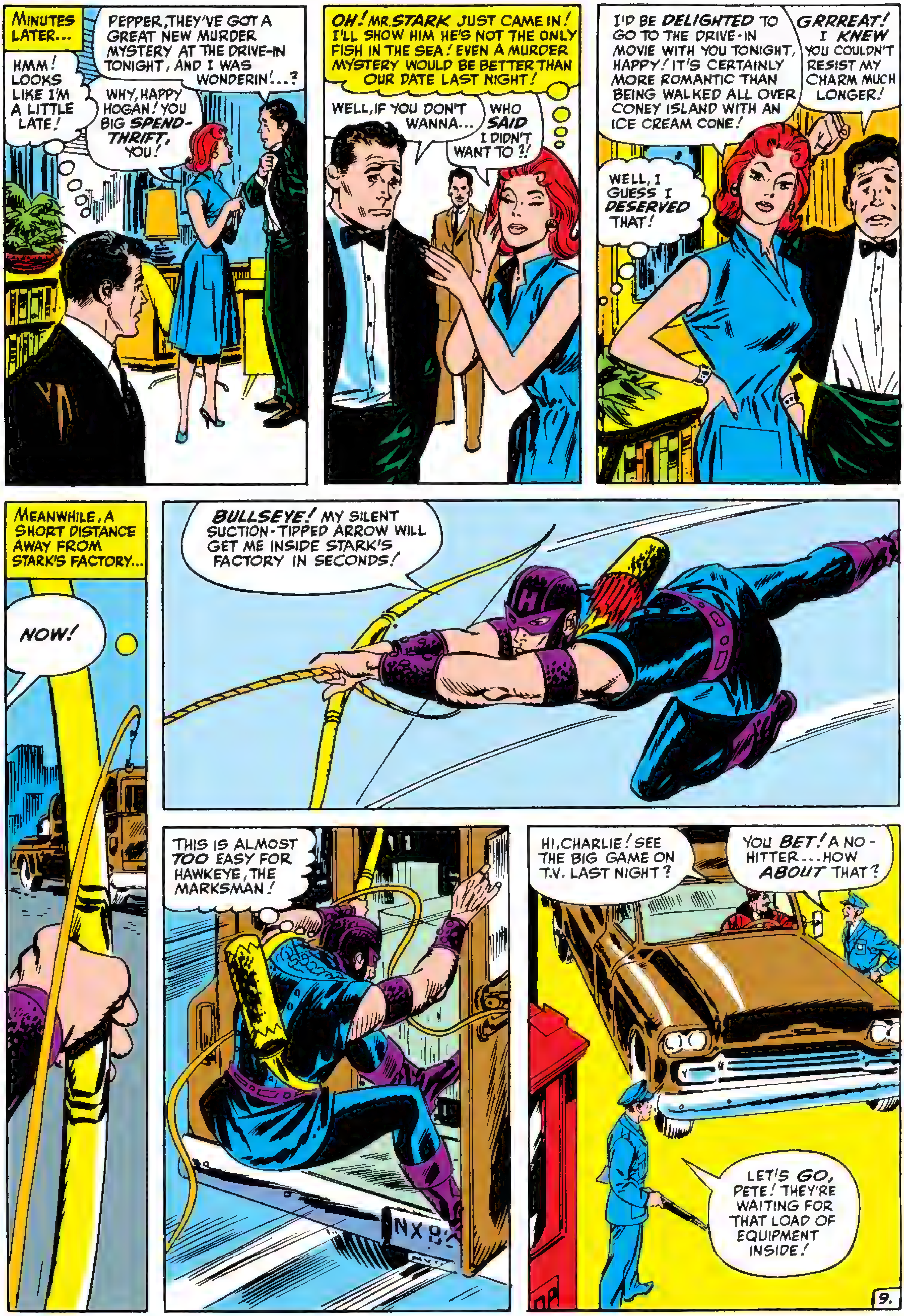

I'LL PUT THE FULL POWER OF MY ARMORED BODY AGAINST THE FLYING PINWHEEL! -UHH- CAN'T HOLD MUCH LONGER! THIS *HAS* TO DO IT!
FOR LONG GRUELLING SECONDS, THE MAN OF IRON HOLDS ON GRIMLY... KNOWING THAT HUMAN LIVES HANG IN THE BALANCE! AND THEN, SLOWLY, EXCRUCIATINGLY, THE GIANT MACHINE GRINDS TO A HALT...
IRON MAN *DID* IT! HE PREVENTED A DISASTER!!
BUT HOW DID HE GET HERE SO QUICKLY??
UH-OH! I'LL HAVE TO THINK OF AN ANSWER TO THAT ONE, FAST!!
I KNOW... I'LL TELL PEPPER I WENT TO FIND IRON MAN... I'LL SAY HE HAD ORDERS TO FOLLOW US TO CONEY ISLAND!
SHE'S SURE TO BELIEVE IT! MOST EVERYBODY THINKS IRON MAN ALWAYS TAGS ALONG BEHIND ME *ANYWAY!*
MEANTIME, THERE IS *ONE* OBSERVER WHO FEELS NO JOY AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED! THE ONLY EMOTION HE EXPERIENCES IS ONE OF BURNING, BLAZING *JEALOUSY!*
I'M THE GREATEST MARKSMAN THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN! AND YET, THEY *IGNORE* ME!!
WHY COULDN'T *I* DO ALL THE THINGS IRON MAN CAN DO?? ALL IT TAKES ARE A LOT OF MECHANICAL GIMMICKS... AND A COLORFUL COSTUME DISGUISE!
AND SO, WE ARE ABOUT TO WITNESS THE CREATION OF ONE OF THE MOST STARTLING ARCH-VILLAINS OF ALL TIME!!
A SHORT TIME LATER, IN A BASEMENT WORKSHOP, THE BROODING MARKSMAN WORKS FEVERISHLY...
I'LL MAKE MYSELF A COSTUME THAT NO ONE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO FORGET!

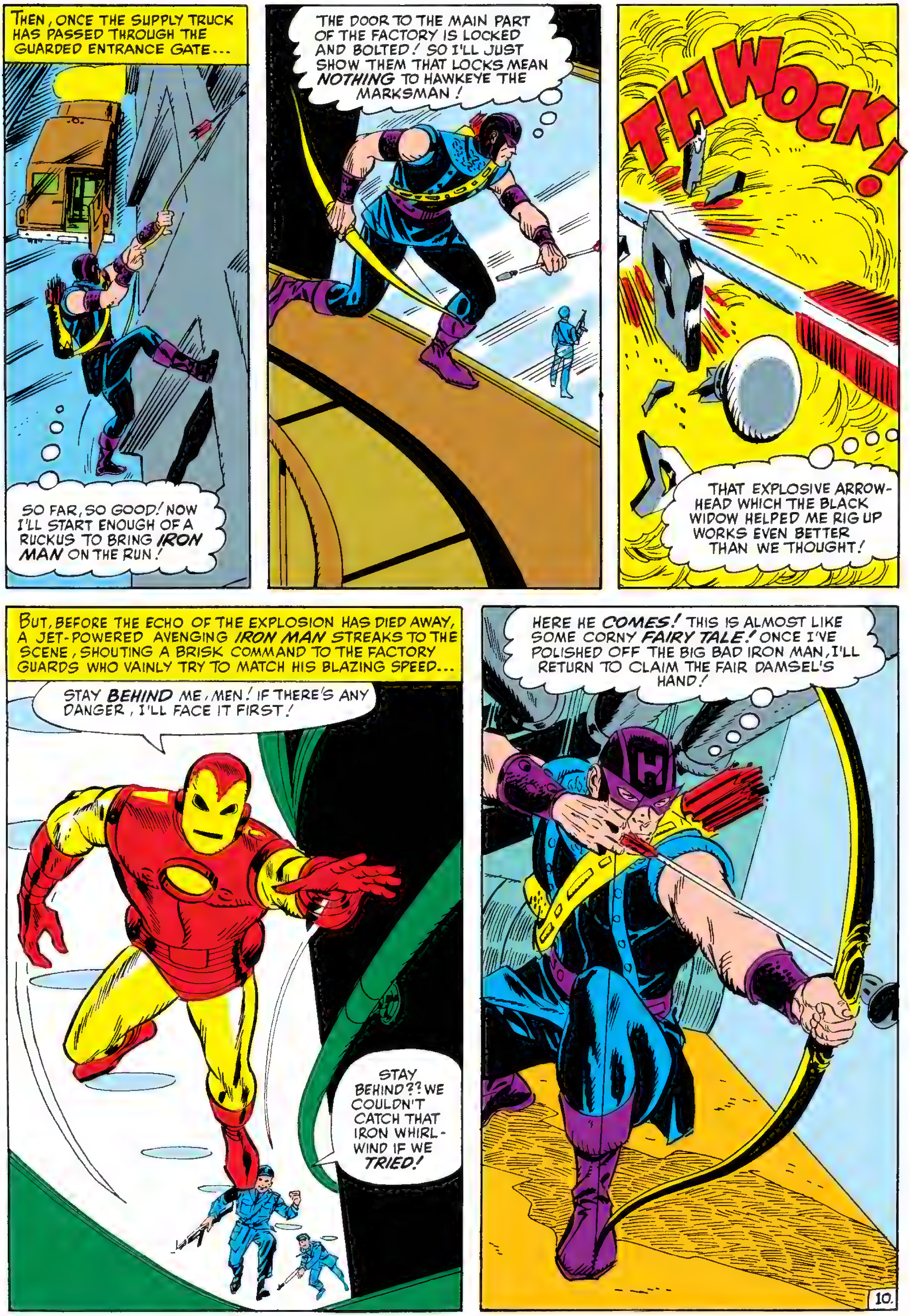

NIGHT TURNS TO DAY, AND BACK TO NIGHT AGAIN, AND STILL THE FANATICAL MAN WORKS WITH A DESPERATE ZEAL...
BUT A COSTUME IS ONLY *PART* OF IT! I'LL NEED *WEAPONS!*
...AND WHAT *BETTER* WEAPONS THAN MY INFALLIBLE *ARROWS?!!*
EACH WITH A SPECIALLY-FITTED TIP OF ITS OWN!
NEVER AGAIN WILL PEOPLE SNEER AT MY "PERFORMANCE"!
AND NOW, INASMUCH AS MOST *OTHER* COSTUMED ADVENTURERS CHOOSE TO WEAR MASKS, *HAWKEYE* WILL DO THE SAME!
SO, LET *IRON MAN*... AND *EVERY* COSTUMED ADVENTURER LOOK TO HIS LAURELS!! FOR *HAWKEYE* IS ABOUT TO MAKE THEM ALL LOOK *SICK!*
ALTHOUGH I POSSESS NO SUPER-POWERS OTHER THAN MY UNFAILING *ACCURACY* AT TARGET SHOOTING, I CAN DO WHATEVER *OTHERS CAN* DO BY MEANS OF MY *ARROWS!*
FOR INSTANCE, IF I SHOULD WANT TO "FLY" TO THAT ROOF-TOP...

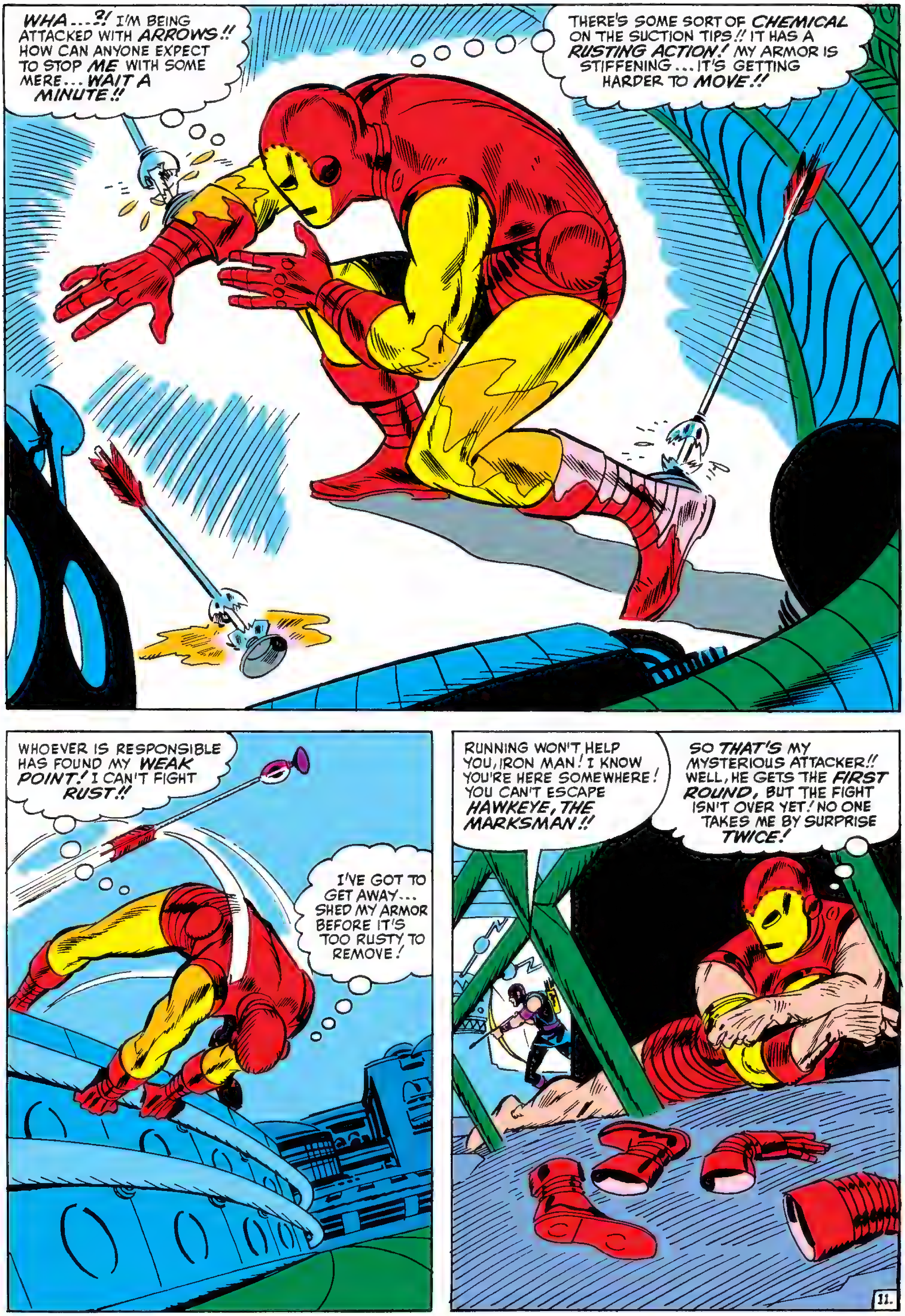

MY SUCTION TIPPED ARROW STICKS TO THE EXACT SPOT I AIM FOR, AND THEN...
...MY SPRING PULLEY DEVICE WHISKS ME TOWARDS THE ARROW TIP IN JUST SECONDS...
WHAT A *THRILL!!* I FEEL AS THOUGH THE DESTINY OF THE ENTIRE CITY BELOW ME IS IN MY POWERFUL GLOVED HANDS!
THIS IS ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! RIGHT BELOW ME...THAT FLEEING FOOL JUST ROBBED A JEWELRY STORE!
I CAN STOP HIM WITH MY EYES CLOSED!!
GEM
FOR THE LUVVA PETE!!
THANG!
A PERFECT SHOT!! AS ALWAYS!!
NOW TO MAKE THE CAPTURE AND... *WHA..?* HE'S GETTING *AWAY!*
THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR TAKING PAINS NOT TO *INJURE* HIM!!
WELL, I'LL CATCH UP WITH HIM IN A MINUTE! FIRST, I'LL JUST INSPECT WHAT HE DROPPED!
NO *WONDER* HE RAN SO FAST! THIS IS QUITE A *HAUL!* DIAMONDS... RUBIES...
JUST THEN, AN IRONIC DEVELOPMENT OCCURS! ATTRACTED BY THE NOISE, THE *POLICE* ARRIVE, AND...
DON'T MOVE!! WE CAUGHT YOUR PARTNER, AND WE'VE GOT *YOU* DEAD TO RIGHTS!
THEY THINK I HELPED ROB THE STORE!

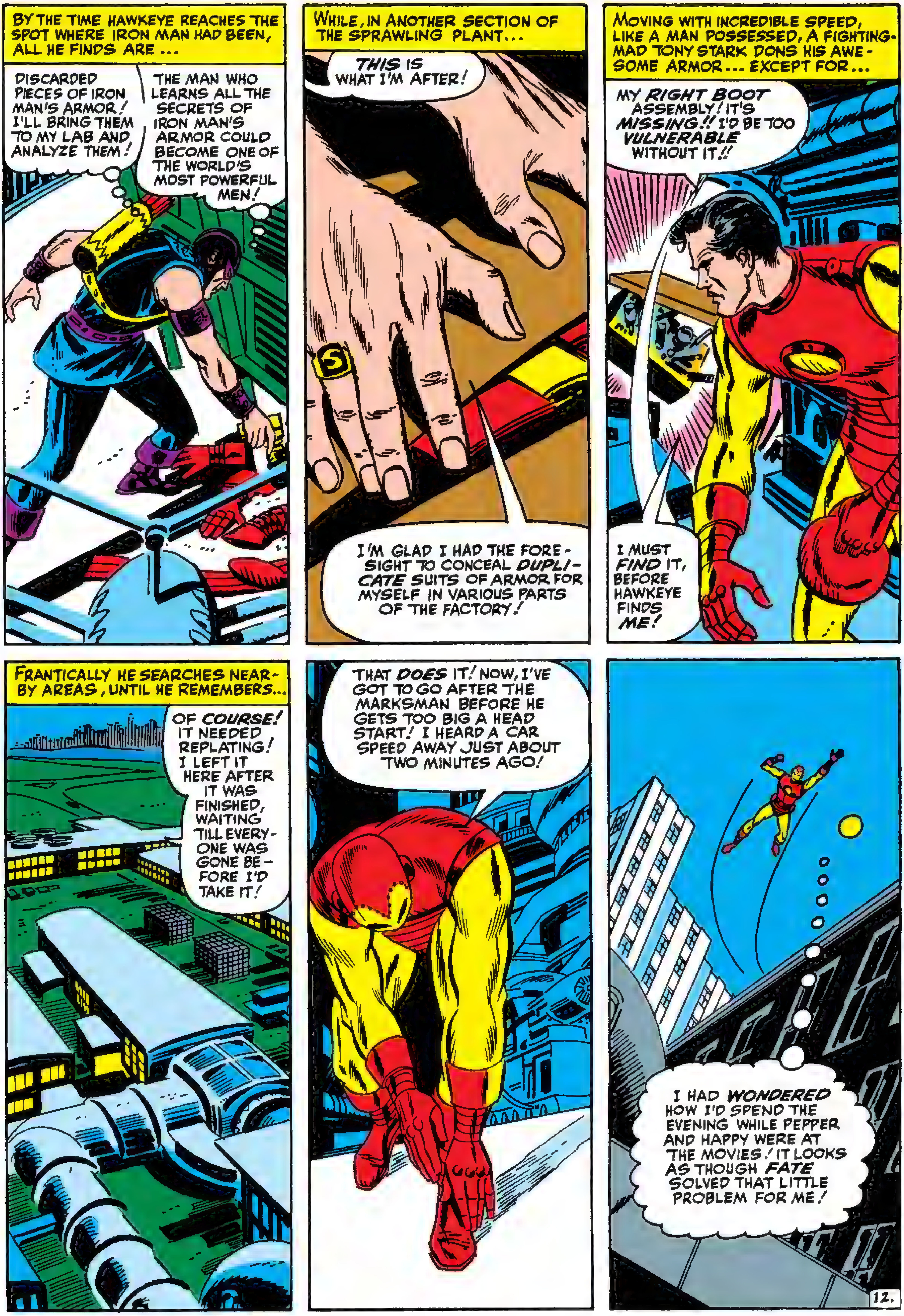

DROPPING THE STOLEN JEWELRY, HAWKEYE BEGINS A MAD DASH FOR FREEDOM AS THE OFFICERS TAKE UP THE CHASE...
THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE I'M INNOCENT! I'LL HAVE TO RUN FOR IT!
HALT... IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!
LOOK! HE DROPPED THE LOOT! WE'D BETTER PICK IT UP BEFORE SOMEONE HELPS HIMSELF TO IT!
AND, AS HAWKEYE TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE MOMENTARY RESPITE...
THAT MAN... RACING SO SWIFTLY! HE MIGHT BE WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR!
WHY RUN WHEN YOU CAN RIDE!? SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND YOU!
JUST WHAT I NEED... A LIFT! BUT, WHY DID SHE STOP FOR ME..??
LOOK, LADY... I.. WOW!!
WHAT IS WRONG? IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?!
AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, HAWKEYE SEES ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD...
...THE DARING, DAZZLING DANGEROUS BLACK WIDOW!!
LADY, WHOEVER YOU ARE, DON'T PINCH ME! THIS IS ONE DREAM I DON'T EVER WANT TO WAKE UP FROM!
I ASSURE YOU, MY COSTUMED FRIEND, THIS IS NO DREAM!
IF YOU ARE AS ADVENTUROUS AND POWERFUL AS YOUR APPEARANCE WOULD INDICATE, YOU MIGHT BE THE VERY ALLY I'VE BEEN SEEKING!
WHATEVER YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR, GORGEOUS, YOU CAN BET YOUR BOTTOM DOLLAR... I'M IT!
THUS, SMITTEN BY THE BLACK WIDOW'S FATAL BEAUTY, THE MAN CALLED HAWKEYE ENTERS INTO A DRAMATIC ALLIANCE WHICH IS TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF BOTH THEIR LIVES, AND IRON MAN'S AS WELL!

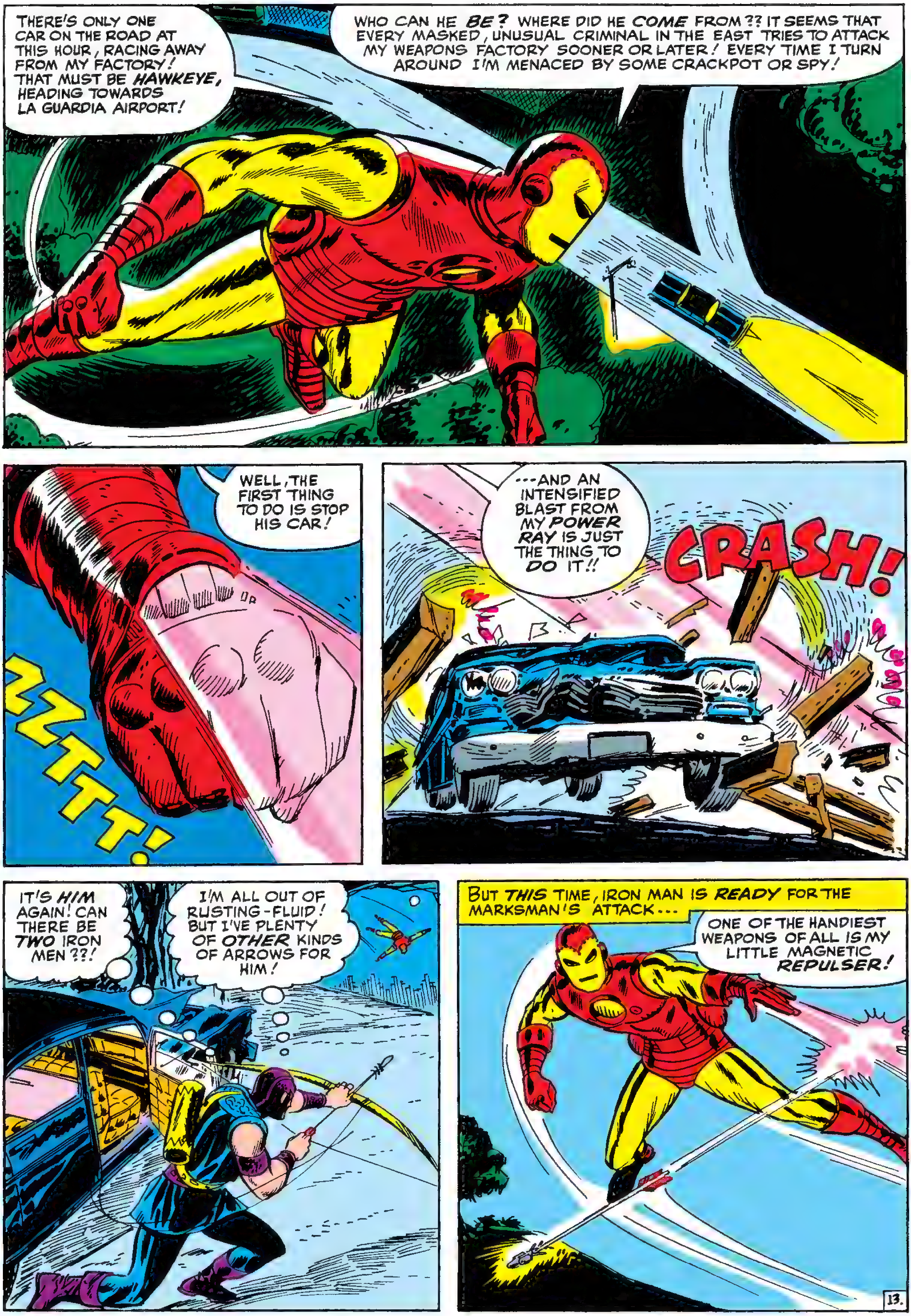

IN A LUXURIOUS SUBURB, JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY, THE BLACK WIDOW LEADS HAWKEYE THROUGH A LAVISHLY FURNISHED ESTATE UNTIL THEY REACH A STAIRWAY, LEADING TO A SUBTERRANEAN LABORATORY!
FOLLOW ME, HAWKEYE!
TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, GORGEOUS!
IT IS FORTUNATE THAT HE IS TAKEN WITH MY BEAUTY! I WILL BE ABLE TO TWIST HIM AROUND MY LITTLE FINGER! BUT HE MUST NOT LEARN THAT I AM REALLY A RED SPY!
SAY! THIS IS SOME GREAT LAB YOU'VE GOT HERE! BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE THE SCIENTIST TYPE TO ME!
I'M NOT! THIS EQUIPMENT BELONGS TO THE ONE I RENT THIS HOME FROM! BUT THERE ARE THINGS HERE WHICH WILL INCREASE YOUR OWN POWERS!
MY COMMUNIST MASTERS PROVIDED THIS ESTATE FOR ME! AND NOW THEIR INVESTMENT SHALL REALLY PAY OFF!
MM... I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN! SOME OF THE DEVICES DESCRIBED IN THIS BOOK WOULD MAKE GREAT WEAPONS IF FITTED ONTO MY ARROWS!
BUT WHAT'S THE ANGLE, BEAUTIFUL? DO YOU HAVE ANY DRAGONS YOU WANT SLAIN, OR WHAT??
IN A WAY, YES!! THE FAMOUS IRON MAN IS A MORTAL ENEMY OF MINE! ANY MAN WHO COULD DEFEAT HIM WOULD BE A MAN I COULD LEARN TO LOVE!
HE'S AS GOOD AS BEATEN, BABY!
BUT, ONE THING MORE... NO HARM MUST COME TO HIS EMPLOYER, TONY STARK!
SO! SHE'S GOT A CRUSH ON STARK, EH? WELL... I'LL PUT A STOP TO THAT!!
MEANTIME, THE MAN IN QUESTION IS NOW BACK AT HIS SPRAWLING FACTORY, LITTLE DREAMING OF THE DANGER THAT AWAITS HIM...
POOR PEPPER! I'M AFRAID I DIDN'T SHOW HER A VERY GOOD TIME LAST NIGHT!
I GUESS THE LEAST I CAN DO IS TAKE HER OUT AGAIN... AND THIS TIME GIVE HER THE TYPE OF GLAMOROUS EVENING SHE MUST HAVE EXPECTED!
I'LL DO IT! I'LL ASK HER RIGHT NOW!
IN FACT, I MIGHT AS WELL BE HONEST WITH MYSELF! I'M NOT DOING IT ONLY FOR HER! I'D LOVE TO TAKE THAT FABULOUS FEMALE TO ALL THE BEST PLACES... TO LOOK INTO THOSE GORGEOUS LIMPID EYES OF HERS...
CAREFUL, STARK, OL' BOY! YOU'RE BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE A FELLA IN LOVE!
OOPS! ALMOST FORGOT! CAN'T LET HER SEE ME LIKE THIS!

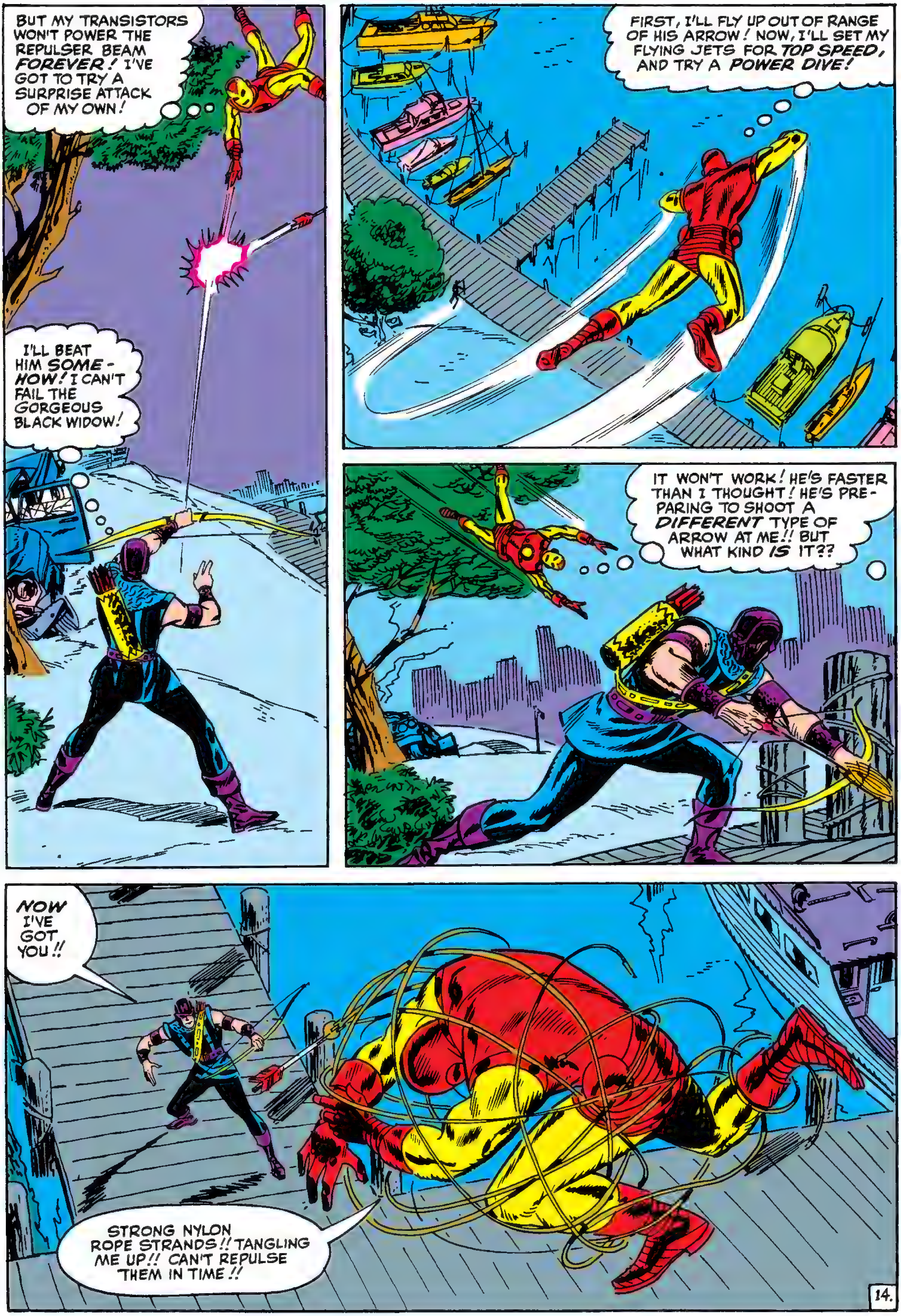

MINUTES LATER...
HMM! LOOKS LIKE I'M A LITTLE LATE!
PEPPER, THEY'VE GOT A GREAT NEW MURDER MYSTERY AT THE DRIVE-IN TONIGHT, AND I WAS WONDERIN'...?
WHY, HAPPY HOGAN! YOU BIG SPEND-THRIFT, YOU!
OH! MR. STARK JUST CAME IN! I'LL SHOW HIM HE'S NOT THE ONLY FISH IN THE SEA! EVEN A MURDER MYSTERY WOULD BE BETTER THAN OUR DATE LAST NIGHT!
WELL, IF YOU DON'T WANNA...
WHO SAID I DIDN'T WANT TO ?!
I'D BE DELIGHTED TO GO TO THE DRIVE-IN MOVIE WITH YOU TONIGHT, HAPPY! IT'S CERTAINLY MORE ROMANTIC THAN BEING WALKED ALL OVER CONEY ISLAND WITH AN ICE CREAM CONE!
GRRREAT! I KNEW YOU COULDN'T RESIST MY CHARM MUCH LONGER!
WELL, I GUESS I DESERVED THAT!
MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY FROM STARK'S FACTORY...
NOW!
BULLSEYE! MY SILENT SUCTION-TIPPED ARROW WILL GET ME INSIDE STARK'S FACTORY IN SECONDS!
THIS IS ALMOST TOO EASY FOR HAWKEYE, THE MARKSMAN!
NX8
HI, CHARLIE! SEE THE BIG GAME ON T.V. LAST NIGHT?
YOU BET! A NO-HITTER...HOW ABOUT THAT?
LET'S GO, PETE! THEY'RE WAITING FOR THAT LOAD OF EQUIPMENT INSIDE!

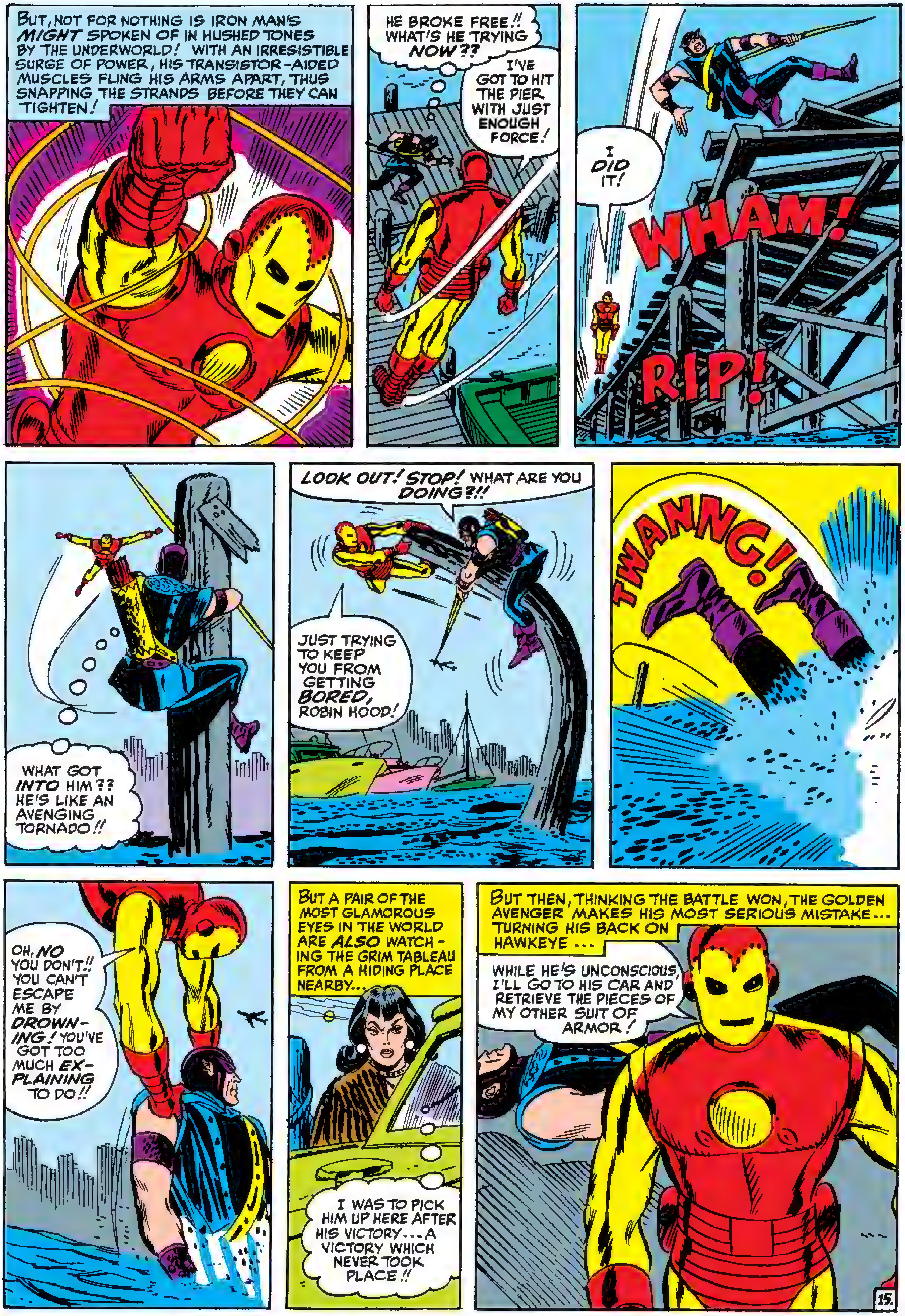

THEN, ONCE THE SUPPLY TRUCK HAS PASSED THROUGH THE GUARDED ENTRANCE GATE...
SO FAR, SO GOOD! NOW I'LL START ENOUGH OF A RUCKUS TO BRING *IRON MAN* ON THE RUN!
THE DOOR TO THE MAIN PART OF THE FACTORY IS LOCKED AND BOLTED! SO I'LL JUST SHOW THEM THAT LOCKS MEAN *NOTHING* TO HAWKEYE THE MARKSMAN!
THWOCK!
THAT EXPLOSIVE ARROWHEAD WHICH THE BLACK WIDOW HELPED ME RIG UP WORKS EVEN BETTER THAN WE THOUGHT!
BUT, BEFORE THE ECHO OF THE EXPLOSION HAS DIED AWAY, A JET-POWERED AVENGING *IRON MAN* STREAKS TO THE SCENE, SHOUTING A BRISK COMMAND TO THE FACTORY GUARDS WHO VAINLY TRY TO MATCH HIS BLAZING SPEED...
STAY *BEHIND* ME, MEN! IF THERE'S ANY DANGER, I'LL FACE IT FIRST!
STAY BEHIND?? WE COULDN'T CATCH THAT IRON WHIRLWIND IF WE *TRIED!*
HERE HE *COMES!* THIS IS ALMOST LIKE SOME CORNY *FAIRY TALE!* ONCE I'VE POLISHED OFF THE BIG BAD IRON MAN, I'LL RETURN TO CLAIM THE FAIR DAMSEL'S HAND!
H

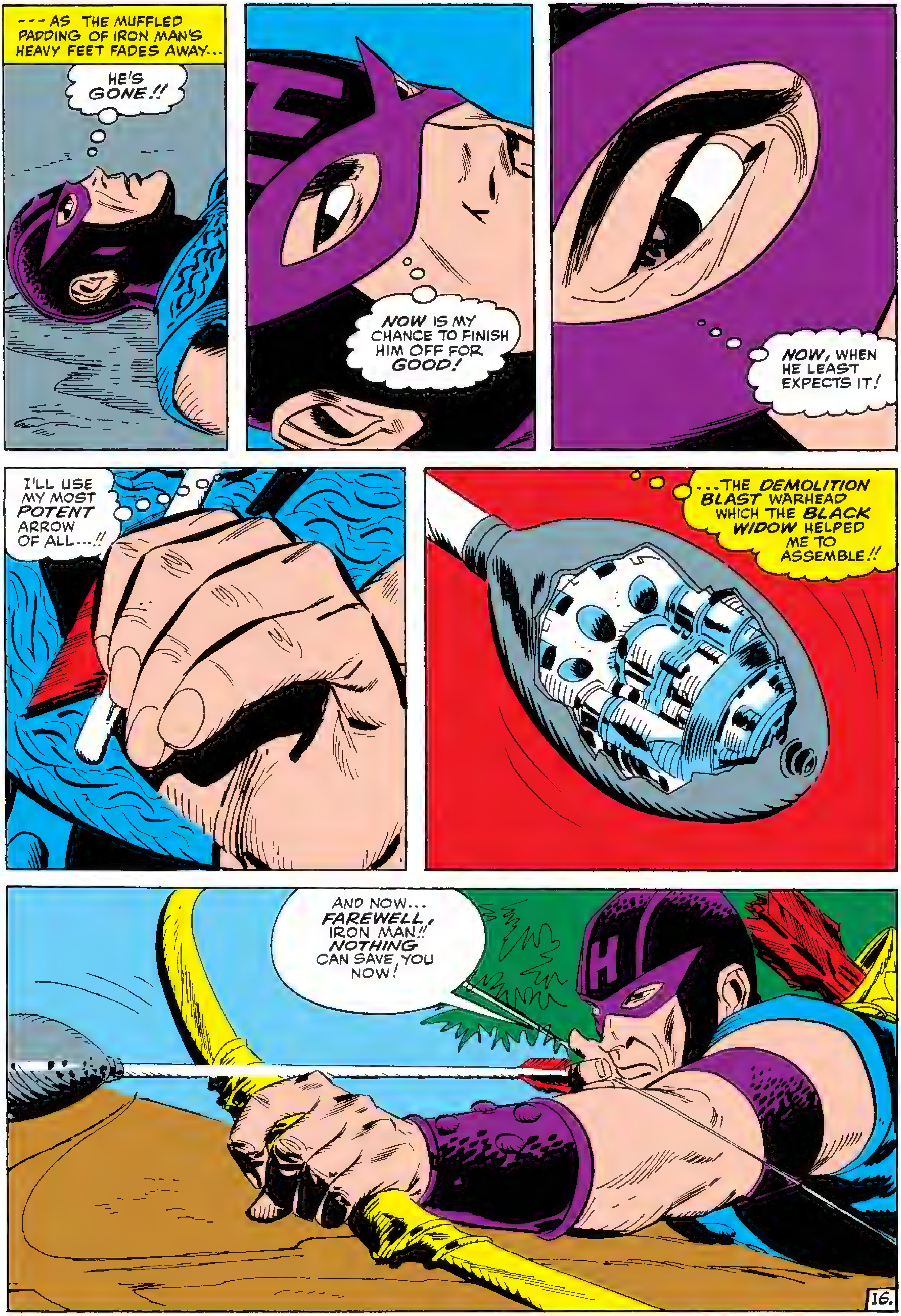

WHA...?! I'M BEING ATTACKED WITH ARROWS!! HOW CAN ANYONE EXPECT TO STOP ME WITH SOME MERE... WAIT A MINUTE!!
THERE'S SOME SORT OF CHEMICAL ON THE SUCTION TIPS!! IT HAS A RUSTING ACTION! MY ARMOR IS STIFFENING... IT'S GETTING HARDER TO MOVE!!
WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE HAS FOUND MY WEAK POINT! I CAN'T FIGHT RUST!!
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY... SHED MY ARMOR BEFORE IT'S TOO RUSTY TO REMOVE!
RUNNING WON'T HELP YOU, IRON MAN! I KNOW YOU'RE HERE SOMEWHERE! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE HAWKEYE, THE MARKSMAN!!
SO THAT'S MY MYSTERIOUS ATTACKER!! WELL, HE GETS THE FIRST ROUND, BUT THE FIGHT ISN'T OVER YET! NO ONE TAKES ME BY SURPRISE TWICE!

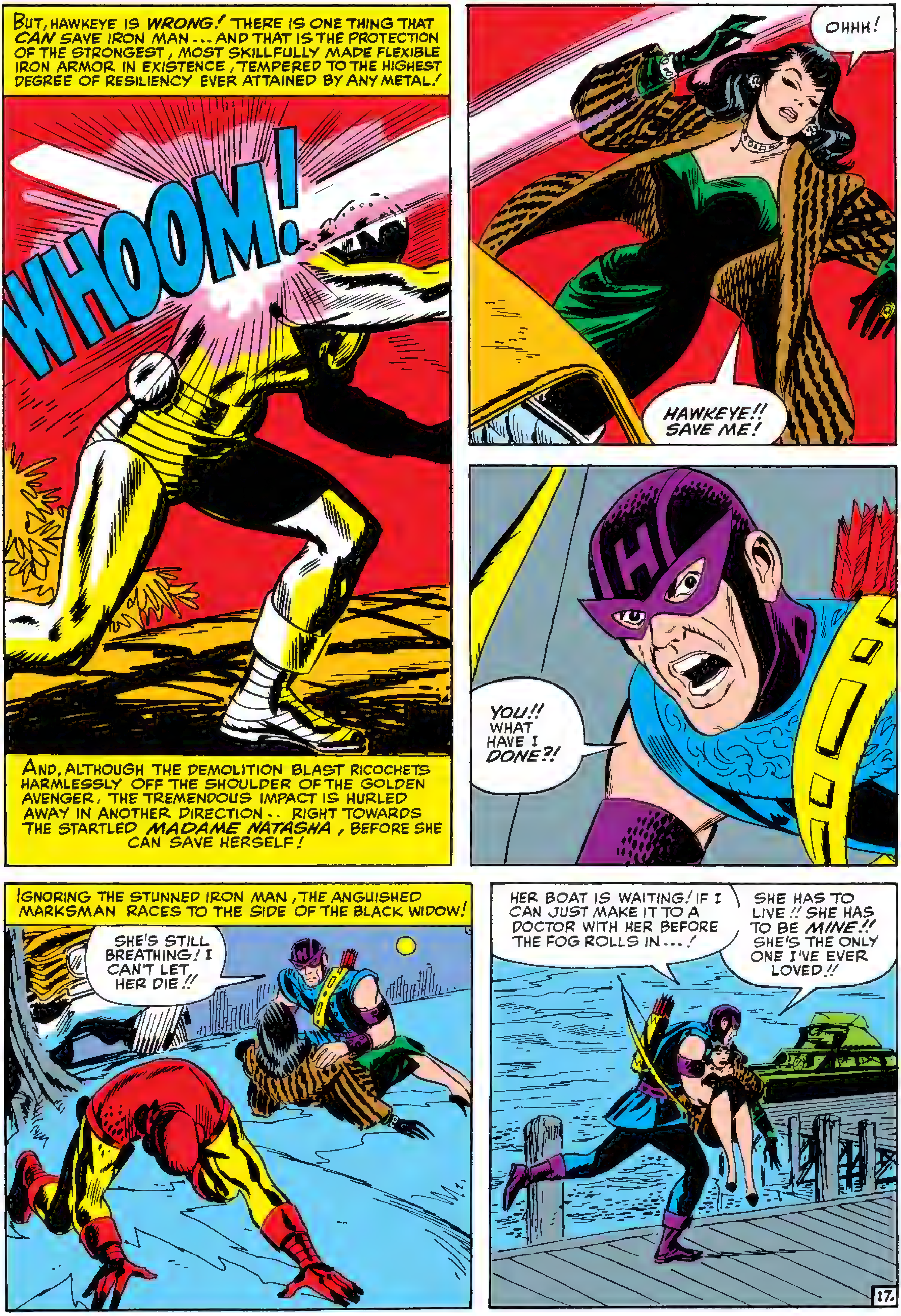

BY THE TIME HAWKEYE REACHES THE SPOT WHERE IRON MAN HAD BEEN, ALL HE FINDS ARE ...
DISCARDED PIECES OF IRON MAN'S ARMOR! I'LL BRING THEM TO MY LAB AND ANALYZE THEM!
THE MAN WHO LEARNS ALL THE SECRETS OF IRON MAN'S ARMOR COULD BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL MEN!
WHILE, IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE SPRAWLING PLANT...
THIS IS WHAT I'M AFTER!
I'M GLAD I HAD THE FORESIGHT TO CONCEAL *DUPLICATE* SUITS OF ARMOR FOR MYSELF IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE FACTORY!
MOVING WITH INCREDIBLE SPEED, LIKE A MAN POSSESSED, A FIGHTING-MAD TONY STARK DONS HIS AWESOME ARMOR... EXCEPT FOR...
MY *RIGHT BOOT* ASSEMBLY! IT'S *MISSING!!* I'D BE TOO *VULNERABLE* WITHOUT IT!!
I MUST *FIND* IT, BEFORE HAWKEYE FINDS *ME!*
FRANTICALLY HE SEARCHES NEARBY AREAS, UNTIL HE REMEMBERS...
OF *COURSE!* IT NEEDED REPLATING! I LEFT IT HERE AFTER IT WAS FINISHED, WAITING TILL EVERYONE WAS GONE BEFORE I'D TAKE IT!
THAT *DOES* IT! NOW, I'VE GOT TO GO AFTER THE MARKSMAN BEFORE HE GETS TOO BIG A HEAD START! I HEARD A CAR SPEED AWAY JUST ABOUT TWO MINUTES AGO!
I HAD *WONDERED* HOW I'D SPEND THE EVENING WHILE PEPPER AND HAPPY WERE AT THE MOVIES! IT LOOKS AS THOUGH *FATE* SOLVED THAT LITTLE PROBLEM FOR ME!

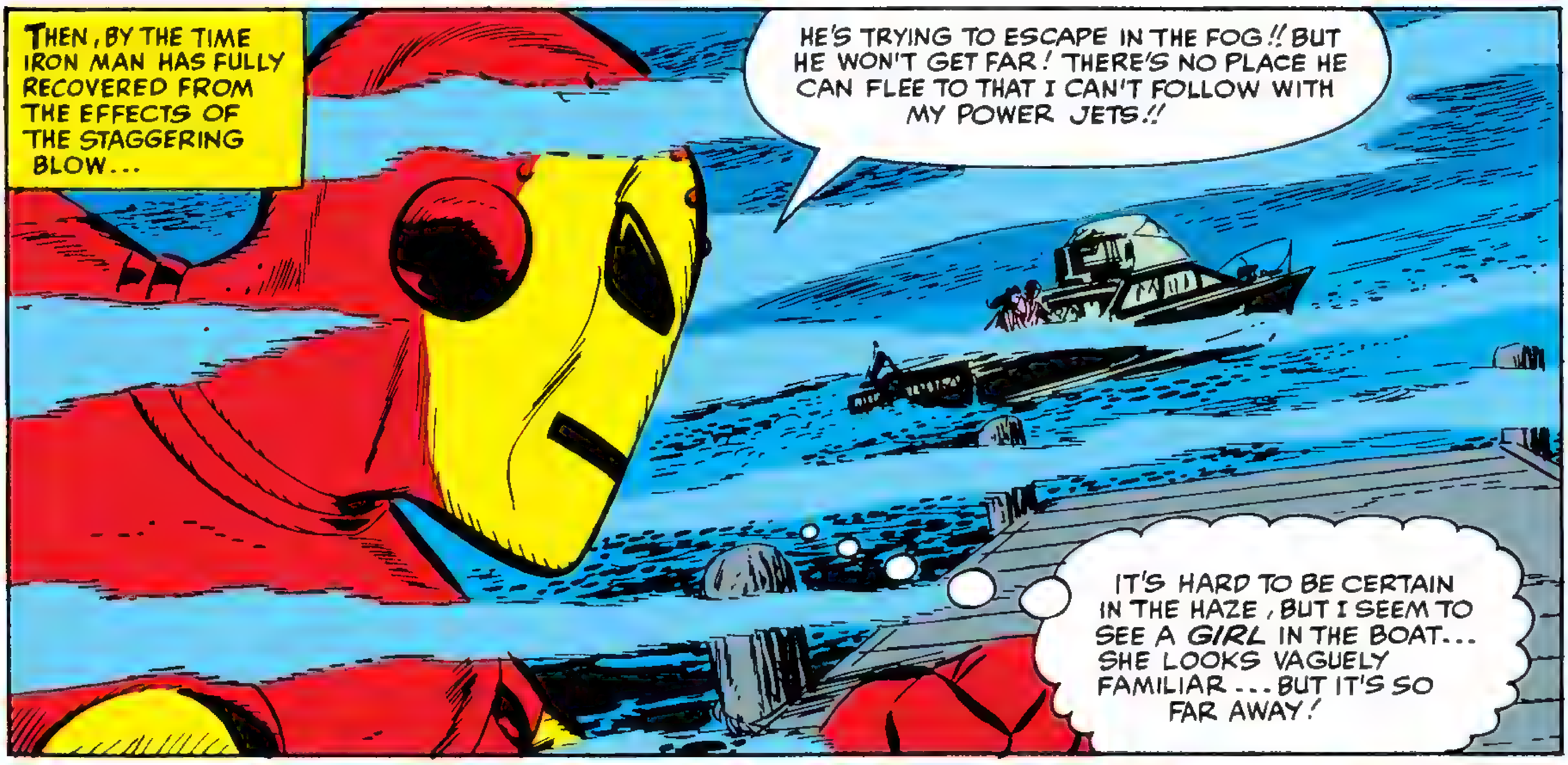

THERE'S ONLY ONE CAR ON THE ROAD AT THIS HOUR, RACING AWAY FROM MY FACTORY! THAT MUST BE *HAWKEYE*, HEADING TOWARDS LA GUARDIA AIRPORT!
WHO CAN HE *BE?* WHERE DID HE *COME* FROM?? IT SEEMS THAT EVERY MASKED, UNUSUAL CRIMINAL IN THE EAST TRIES TO ATTACK MY WEAPONS FACTORY SOONER OR LATER! EVERY TIME I TURN AROUND I'M MENACED BY SOME CRACKPOT OR SPY!
WELL, THE FIRST THING TO DO IS STOP HIS CAR!
ZZTTTT!
...AND AN INTENSIFIED BLAST FROM MY *POWER RAY* IS JUST THE THING TO *DO* IT!!
CRASH!
IT'S *HIM* AGAIN! CAN THERE BE *TWO* IRON MEN??!
I'M ALL OUT OF RUSTING-FLUID! BUT I'VE PLENTY OF *OTHER* KINDS OF ARROWS FOR HIM!
BUT *THIS* TIME, IRON MAN IS *READY* FOR THE MARKSMAN'S ATTACK...
ONE OF THE HANDIEST WEAPONS OF ALL IS MY LITTLE MAGNETIC *REPULSER!*

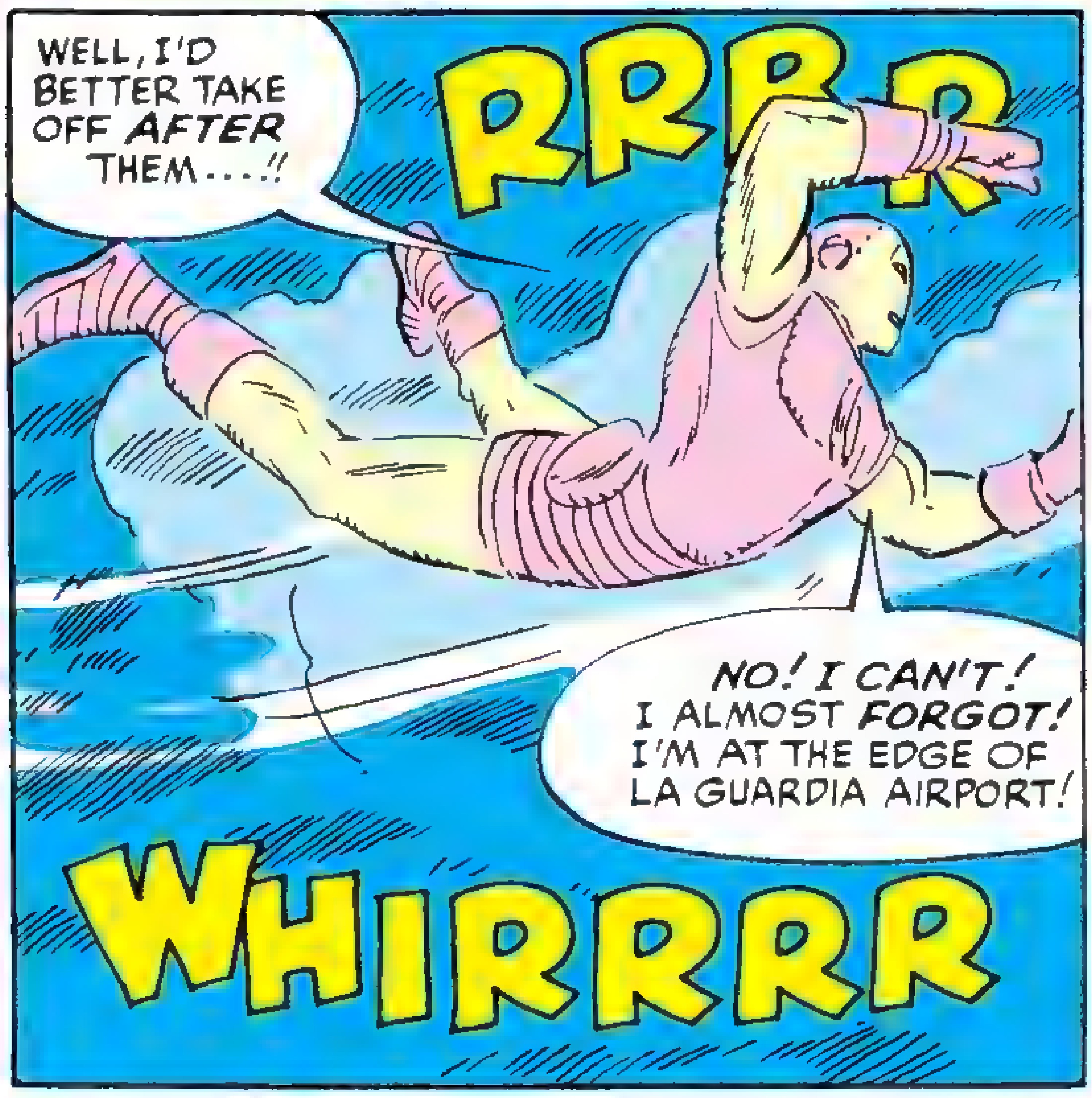

BUT MY TRANSISTORS WON'T POWER THE REPULSER BEAM *FOREVER!* I'VE GOT TO TRY A SURPRISE ATTACK OF MY OWN!
I'LL BEAT HIM *SOME-HOW!* I CAN'T FAIL THE GORGEOUS BLACK WIDOW!
FIRST, I'LL FLY UP OUT OF RANGE OF HIS ARROW! NOW, I'LL SET MY FLYING JETS FOR *TOP SPEED*, AND TRY A *POWER DIVE!*
IT WON'T WORK! HE'S FASTER THAN I THOUGHT! HE'S PREPARING TO SHOOT A *DIFFERENT* TYPE OF ARROW AT ME!! BUT WHAT KIND *IS* IT??
NOW I'VE GOT YOU!!
STRONG NYLON ROPE STRANDS!! TANGLING ME UP!! CAN'T REPULSE THEM IN TIME!!

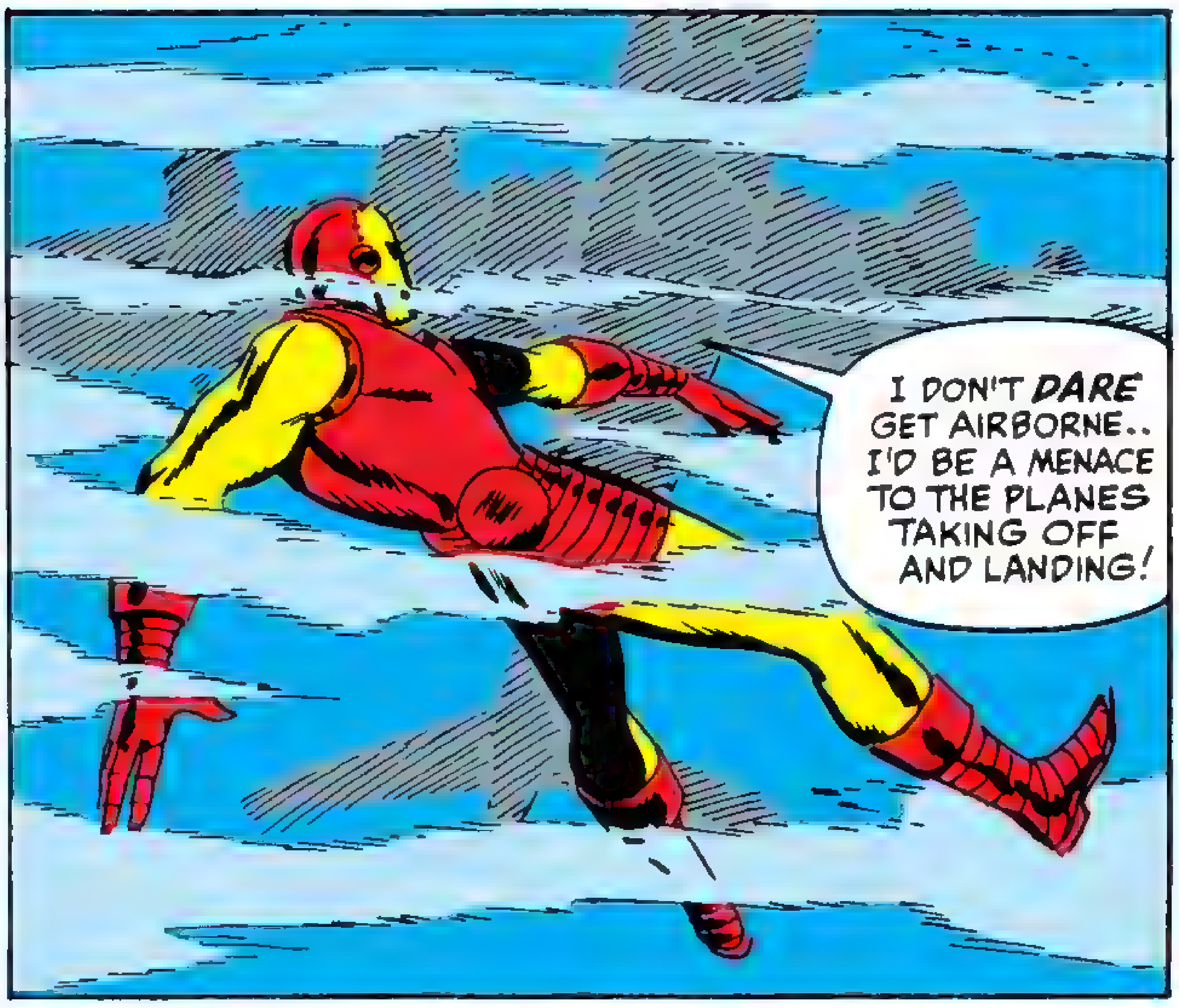

BUT, NOT FOR NOTHING IS IRON MAN'S *MIGHT* SPOKEN OF IN HUSHED TONES BY THE UNDERWORLD! WITH AN IRRESISTIBLE SURGE OF POWER, HIS TRANSISTOR-AIDED MUSCLES FLING HIS ARMS APART, THUS SNAPPING THE STRANDS BEFORE THEY CAN TIGHTEN!
HE BROKE FREE!! WHAT'S HE TRYING *NOW*??
I'VE GOT TO HIT THE PIER WITH JUST ENOUGH FORCE!
I *DID* IT!
WHAM!
RIP!
WHAT GOT *INTO* HIM?? HE'S LIKE AN AVENGING TORNADO!!
LOOK OUT! STOP! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!!*
JUST TRYING TO KEEP YOU FROM GETTING *BORED*, ROBIN HOOD!
TWANNG!
OH, *NO* YOU DON'T!! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME BY *DROWNING!* YOU'VE GOT TOO MUCH *EXPLAINING* TO DO!!
BUT A PAIR OF THE MOST GLAMOROUS EYES IN THE WORLD ARE *ALSO* WATCHING THE GRIM TABLEAU FROM A HIDING PLACE NEARBY...
I WAS TO PICK HIM UP HERE AFTER HIS VICTORY... A VICTORY WHICH NEVER TOOK PLACE!!
BUT THEN, THINKING THE BATTLE WON, THE GOLDEN AVENGER MAKES HIS MOST SERIOUS MISTAKE... TURNING HIS BACK ON HAWKEYE...
WHILE HE'S UNCONSCIOUS, I'LL GO TO HIS CAR AND RETRIEVE THE PIECES OF MY OTHER SUIT OF ARMOR!

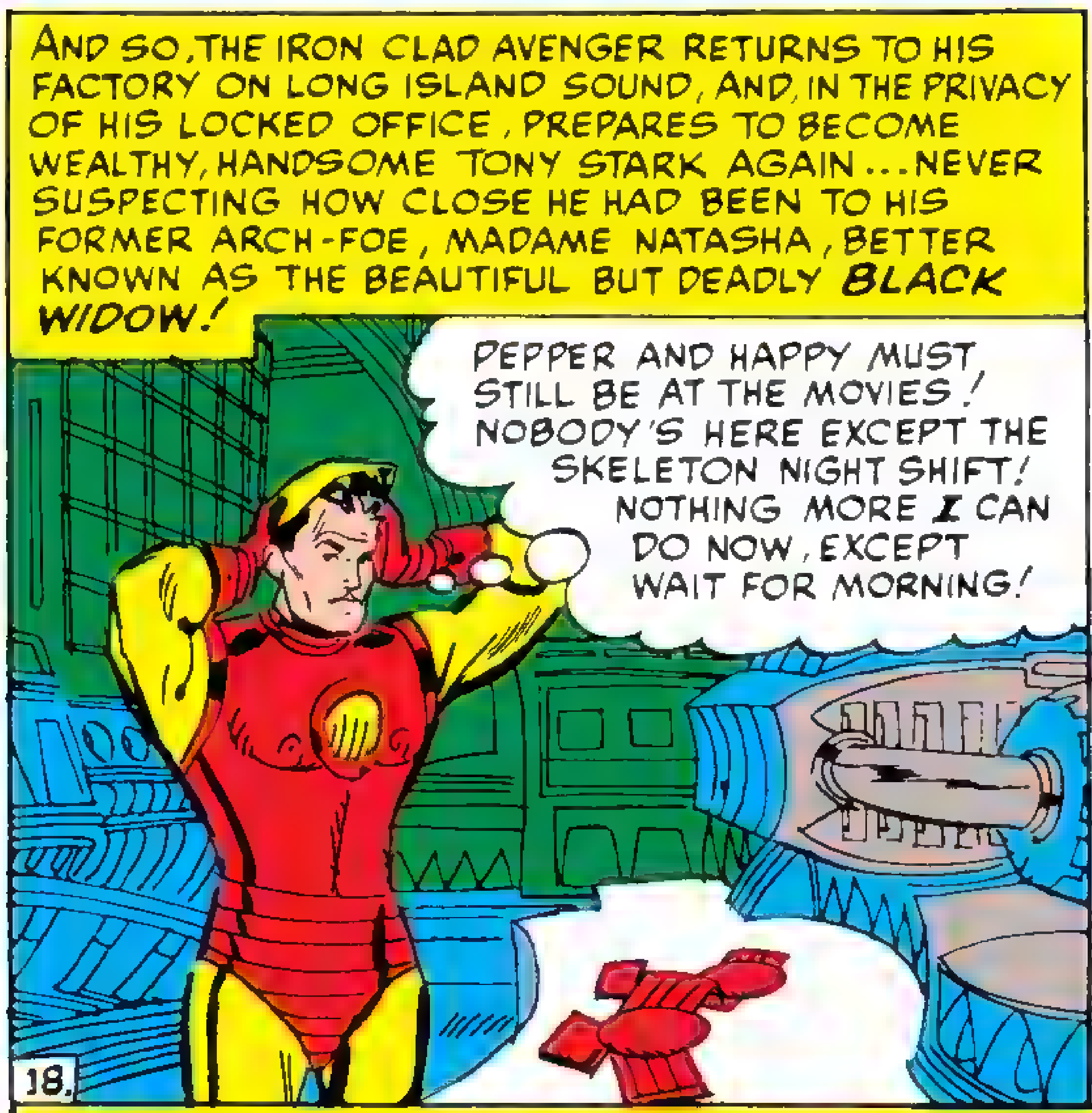

---AS THE MUFFLED PADDING OF IRON MAN'S HEAVY FEET FADES AWAY...
HE'S *GONE!!*
NOW IS MY CHANCE TO FINISH HIM OFF FOR *GOOD!*
NOW, WHEN HE LEAST EXPECTS IT!
I'LL USE MY MOST *POTENT* ARROW OF ALL...!!
...THE *DEMOLITION BLAST* WARHEAD WHICH THE *BLACK WIDOW* HELPED ME TO ASSEMBLE!!
AND NOW... *FAREWELL,* IRON MAN!! *NOTHING* CAN SAVE YOU NOW!

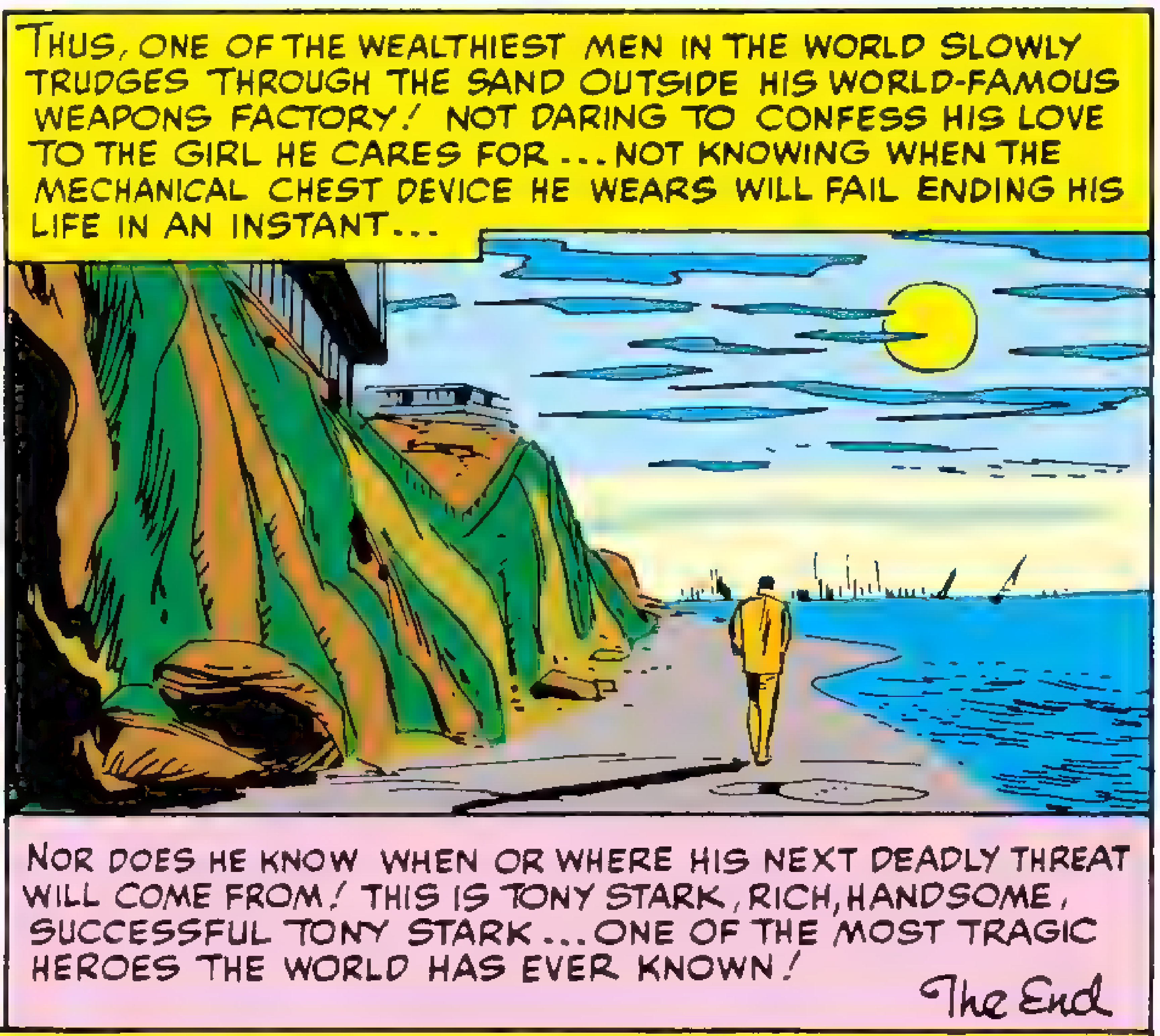

BUT, HAWKEYE IS *WRONG!* THERE IS ONE THING THAT *CAN* SAVE IRON MAN... AND THAT IS THE PROTECTION OF THE STRONGEST, MOST SKILLFULLY MADE FLEXIBLE IRON ARMOR IN EXISTENCE, TEMPERED TO THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF RESILIENCY EVER ATTAINED BY ANY METAL!
WHOOM!
AND, ALTHOUGH THE DEMOLITION BLAST RICOCHETS HARMLESSLY OFF THE SHOULDER OF THE GOLDEN AVENGER, THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT IS HURLED AWAY IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.. RIGHT TOWARDS THE STARTLED *MADAME NATASHA*, BEFORE SHE CAN SAVE HERSELF!
OHHH!
HAWKEYE!! SAVE ME!
YOU!! WHAT HAVE I *DONE?!*
IGNORING THE STUNNED IRON MAN, THE ANGUISHED MARKSMAN RACES TO THE SIDE OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
SHE'S STILL BREATHING! I CAN'T LET HER DIE!!
HER BOAT IS WAITING! IF I CAN JUST MAKE IT TO A DOCTOR WITH HER BEFORE THE FOG ROLLS IN...!
SHE HAS TO LIVE!! SHE HAS TO BE *MINE!!* SHE'S THE ONLY ONE I'VE EVER LOVED!!


THEN, BY THE TIME IRON MAN HAS FULLY RECOVERED FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE STAGGERING BLOW...
HE'S TRYING TO ESCAPE IN THE FOG!! BUT HE WON'T GET FAR! THERE'S NO PLACE HE CAN FLEE TO THAT I CAN'T FOLLOW WITH MY POWER JETS!!
IT'S HARD TO BE CERTAIN IN THE HAZE, BUT I SEEM TO SEE A *GIRL* IN THE BOAT... SHE LOOKS VAGUELY FAMILIAR... BUT IT'S SO FAR AWAY!


WELL, I'D BETTER TAKE OFF *AFTER* THEM...!!
RRRR
NO! I CAN'T! I ALMOST *FORGOT!* I'M AT THE EDGE OF LA GUARDIA AIRPORT!
WHIRRRR

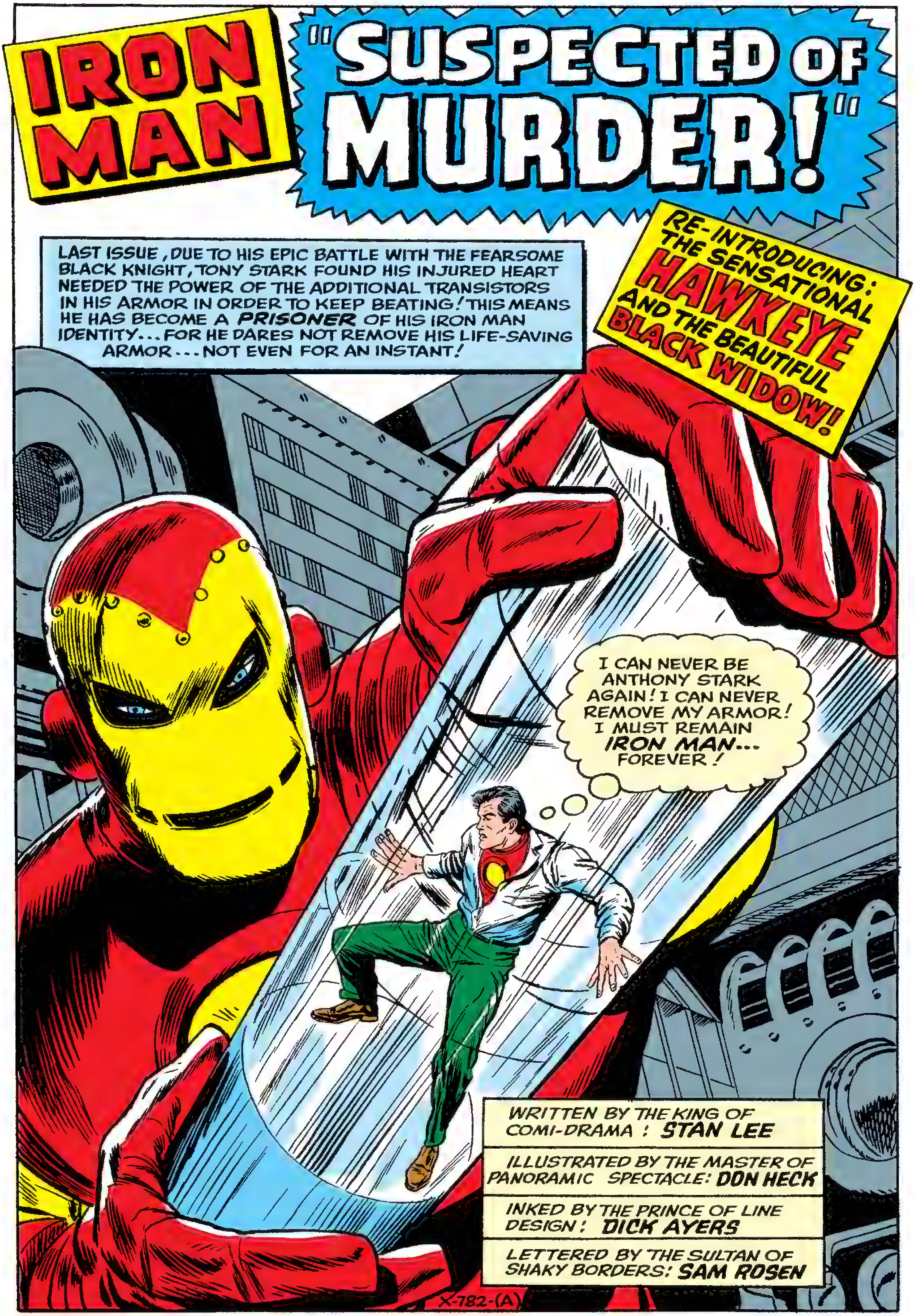

I DON'T *DARE* GET AIRBORNE.. I'D BE A MENACE TO THE PLANES TAKING OFF AND LANDING!

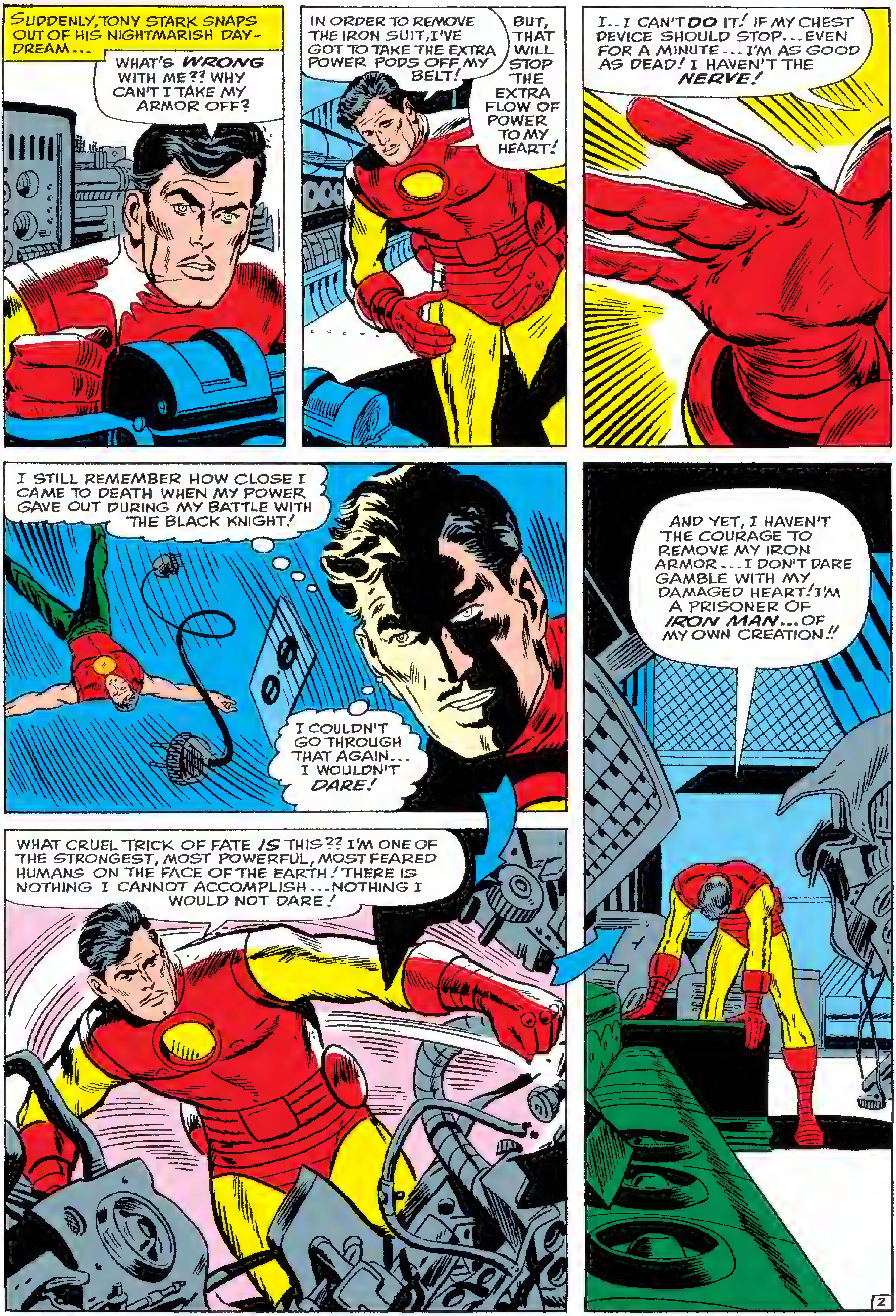

AND SO, THE IRON CLAD AVENGER RETURNS TO HIS FACTORY ON LONG ISLAND SOUND, AND, IN THE PRIVACY OF HIS LOCKED OFFICE, PREPARES TO BECOME WEALTHY, HANDSOME TONY STARK AGAIN... NEVER SUSPECTING HOW CLOSE HE HAD BEEN TO HIS FORMER ARCH-FOE, MADAME NATASHA, BETTER KNOWN AS THE BEAUTIFUL BUT DEADLY *BLACK WIDOW!*
PEPPER AND HAPPY MUST STILL BE AT THE MOVIES! NOBODY'S HERE EXCEPT THE SKELETON NIGHT SHIFT! NOTHING MORE *I* CAN DO NOW, EXCEPT WAIT FOR MORNING!

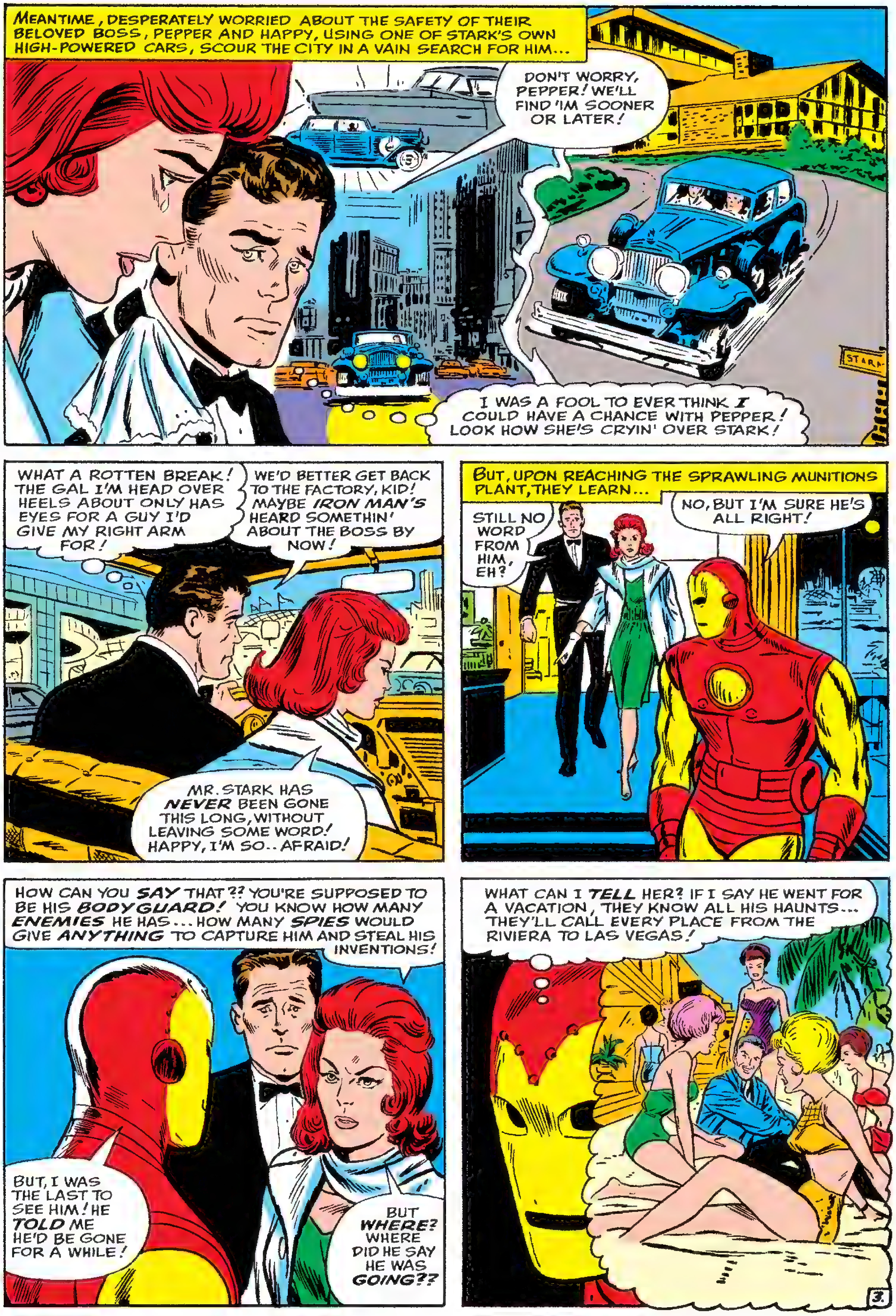

THUS, ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST MEN IN THE WORLD SLOWLY TRUDGES THROUGH THE SAND OUTSIDE HIS WORLD-FAMOUS WEAPONS FACTORY! NOT DARING TO CONFESS HIS LOVE TO THE GIRL HE CARES FOR... NOT KNOWING WHEN THE MECHANICAL CHEST DEVICE HE WEARS WILL FAIL ENDING HIS LIFE IN AN INSTANT...
NOR DOES HE KNOW WHEN OR WHERE HIS NEXT DEADLY THREAT WILL COME FROM! THIS IS TONY STARK, RICH, HANDSOME, SUCCESSFUL TONY STARK... ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC HEROES THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN!
The End

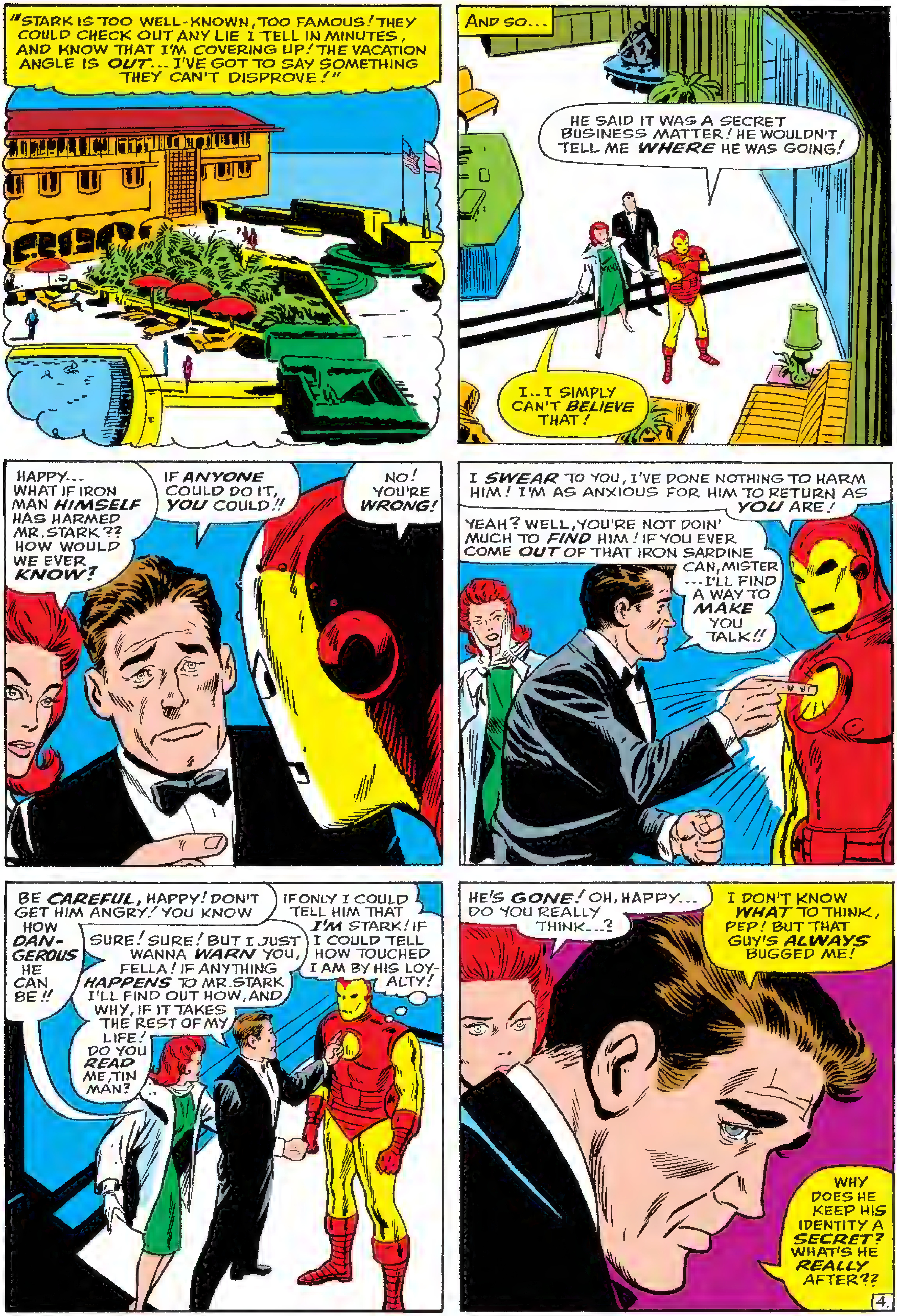
NOTE: FOR THE THRILLING "ORIGIN OF IRON MAN" DON'T MISS "MARVEL TALES ANNUAL"... NOW ON SALE!

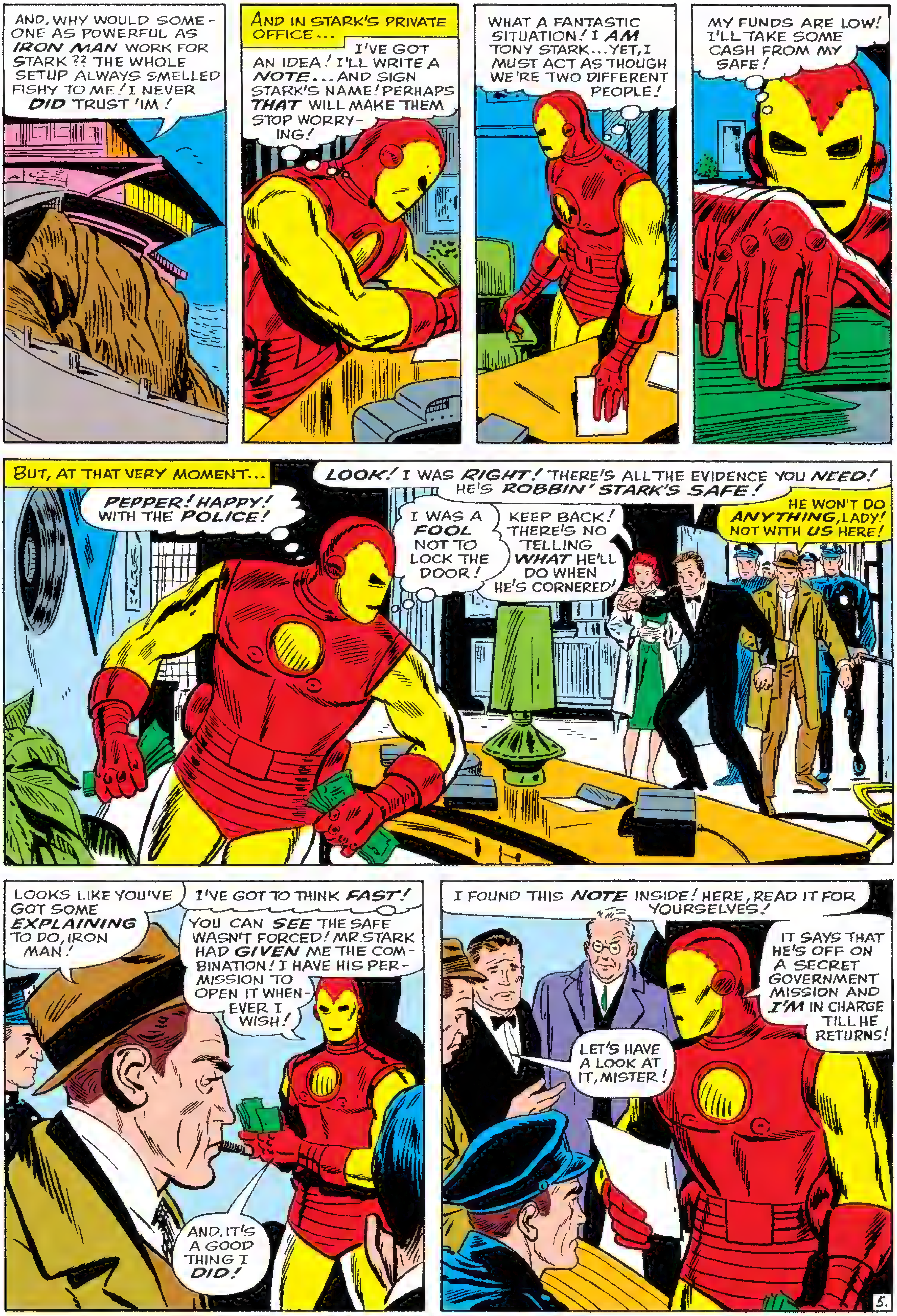
TALES OF SUSPENSE
featuring
IRON MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
60 DEC
IND.
"CAP BATTLES THE ASSASSINS!"
2 TWO MORE GREAT ONES from MARVEL!
'NUFF SAID!
"IRON MAN WANTED FOR MURDER!"

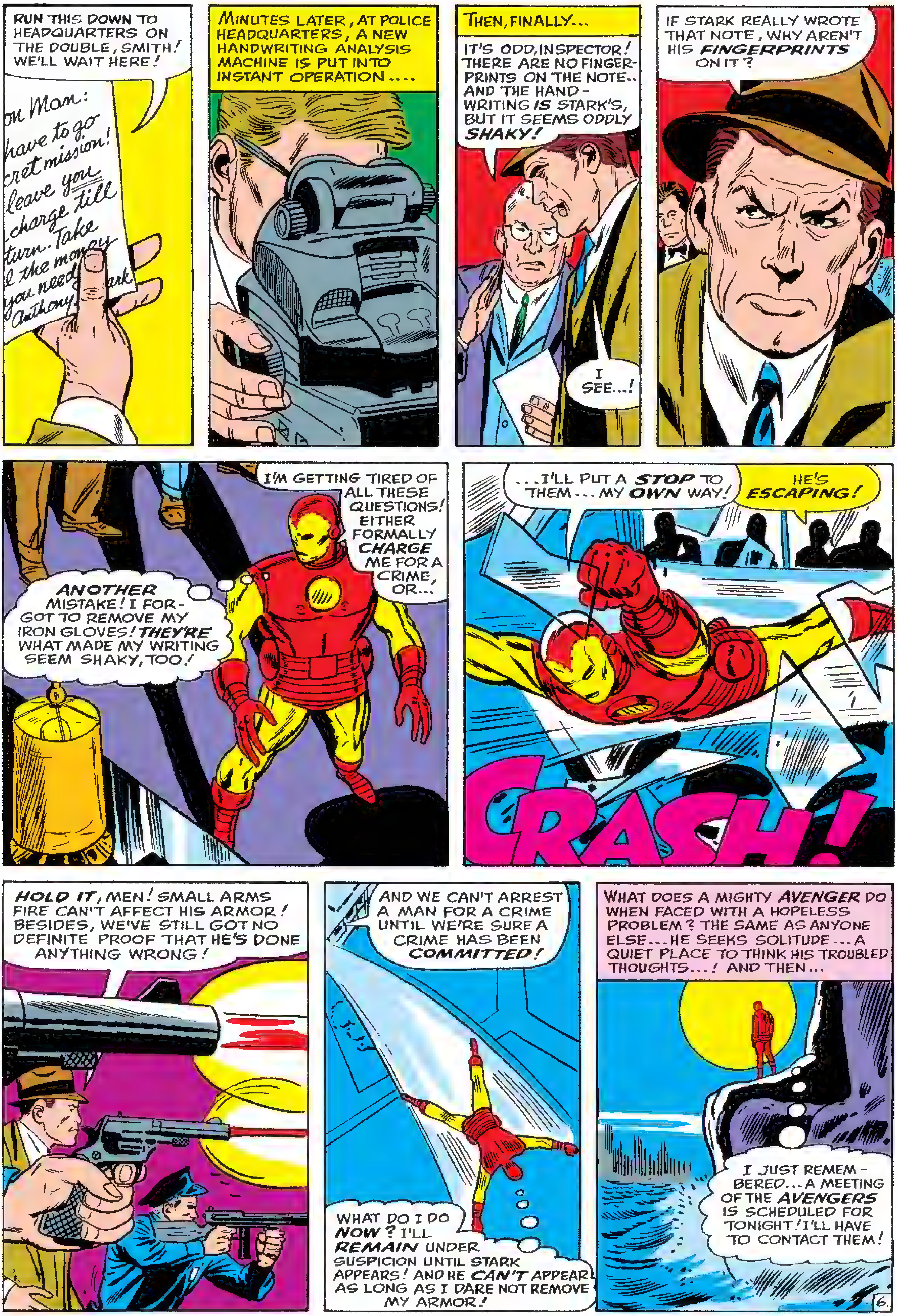

IRON MAN
"SUSPECTED OF MURDER!"
RE-INTRODUCING: THE SENSATIONAL HAWKEYE AND THE BEAUTIFUL BLACK WIDOW!
LAST ISSUE, DUE TO HIS EPIC BATTLE WITH THE FEARSOME BLACK KNIGHT, TONY STARK FOUND HIS INJURED HEART NEEDED THE POWER OF THE ADDITIONAL TRANSISTORS IN HIS ARMOR IN ORDER TO KEEP BEATING! THIS MEANS HE HAS BECOME A *PRISONER* OF HIS IRON MAN IDENTITY... FOR HE DARES NOT REMOVE HIS LIFE-SAVING ARMOR... NOT EVEN FOR AN INSTANT!
I CAN NEVER BE ANTHONY STARK AGAIN! I CAN NEVER REMOVE MY ARMOR! I MUST REMAIN *IRON MAN*... FOREVER!
WRITTEN BY THE KING OF COMI-DRAMA : **STAN LEE**
ILLUSTRATED BY THE MASTER OF PANORAMIC SPECTACLE: **DON HECK**
INKED BY THE PRINCE OF LINE DESIGN : **DICK AYERS**
LETTERED BY THE SULTAN OF SHAKY BORDERS: **SAM ROSEN**
X-782-(A)

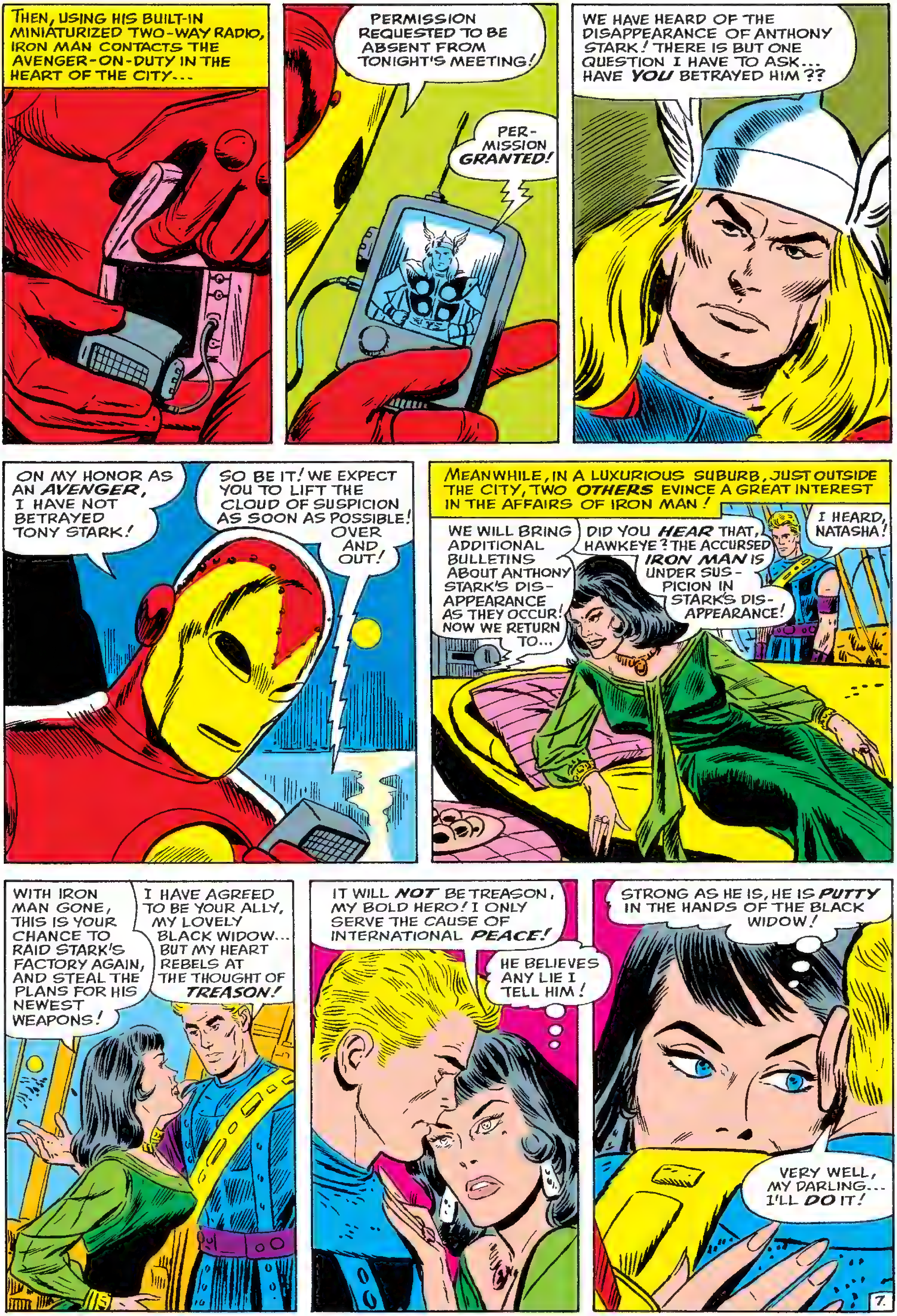

SUDDENLY, TONY STARK SNAPS OUT OF HIS NIGHTMARISH DAY-DREAM...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?? WHY CAN'T I TAKE MY ARMOR OFF?
IN ORDER TO REMOVE THE IRON SUIT, I'VE GOT TO TAKE THE EXTRA POWER PODS OFF MY BELT!
BUT, THAT WILL STOP THE EXTRA FLOW OF POWER TO MY HEART!
I..I CAN'T DO IT! IF MY CHEST DEVICE SHOULD STOP...EVEN FOR A MINUTE...I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD! I HAVEN'T THE NERVE!
I STILL REMEMBER HOW CLOSE I CAME TO DEATH WHEN MY POWER GAVE OUT DURING MY BATTLE WITH THE BLACK KNIGHT!
I COULDN'T GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN... I WOULDN'T DARE!
WHAT CRUEL TRICK OF FATE IS THIS?? I'M ONE OF THE STRONGEST, MOST POWERFUL, MOST FEARED HUMANS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH! THERE IS NOTHING I CANNOT ACCOMPLISH...NOTHING I WOULD NOT DARE!
AND YET, I HAVEN'T THE COURAGE TO REMOVE MY IRON ARMOR...I DON'T DARE GAMBLE WITH MY DAMAGED HEART! I'M A PRISONER OF IRON MAN...OF MY OWN CREATION!!

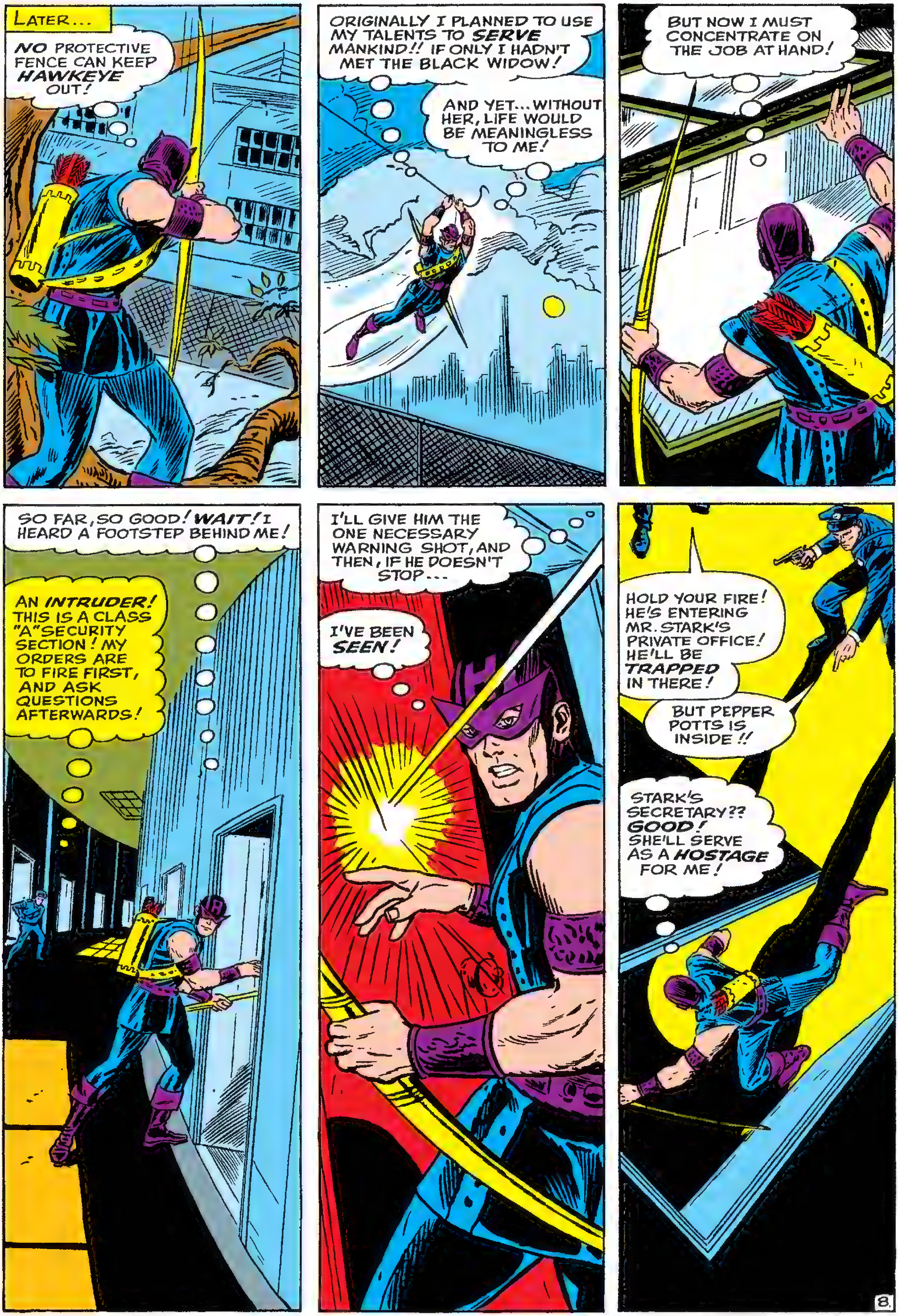

MEANTIME, DESPERATELY WORRIED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THEIR BELOVED BOSS, PEPPER AND HAPPY, USING ONE OF STARK'S OWN HIGH-POWERED CARS, SCOUR THE CITY IN A VAIN SEARCH FOR HIM...
DON'T WORRY, PEPPER! WE'LL FIND 'IM SOONER OR LATER!
STARK
I WAS A FOOL TO EVER THINK I COULD HAVE A CHANCE WITH PEPPER! LOOK HOW SHE'S CRYIN' OVER STARK!
WHAT A ROTTEN BREAK! THE GAL I'M HEAD OVER HEELS ABOUT ONLY HAS EYES FOR A GUY I'D GIVE MY RIGHT ARM FOR!
WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE FACTORY, KID! MAYBE IRON MAN'S HEARD SOMETHIN' ABOUT THE BOSS BY NOW!
MR. STARK HAS NEVER BEEN GONE THIS LONG, WITHOUT LEAVING SOME WORD! HAPPY, I'M SO.. AFRAID!
BUT, UPON REACHING THE SPRAWLING MUNITIONS PLANT, THEY LEARN...
STILL NO WORD FROM HIM, EH?
NO, BUT I'M SURE HE'S ALL RIGHT!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HIS BODYGUARD! YOU KNOW HOW MANY ENEMIES HE HAS... HOW MANY SPIES WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO CAPTURE HIM AND STEAL HIS INVENTIONS!
BUT, I WAS THE LAST TO SEE HIM! HE TOLD ME HE'D BE GONE FOR A WHILE!
BUT WHERE? WHERE DID HE SAY HE WAS GOING??
WHAT CAN I TELL HER? IF I SAY HE WENT FOR A VACATION, THEY KNOW ALL HIS HAUNTS... THEY'LL CALL EVERY PLACE FROM THE RIVIERA TO LAS VEGAS!

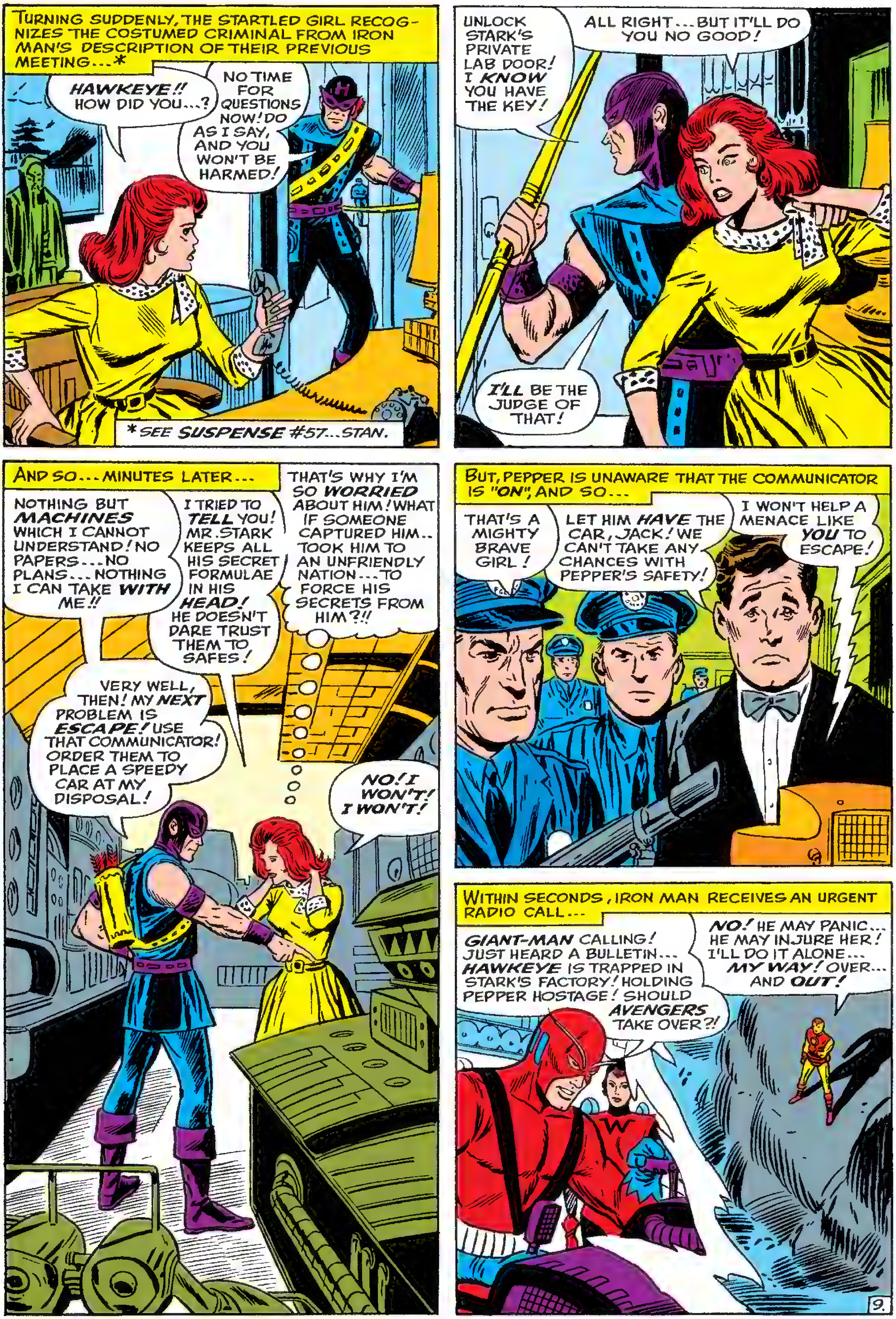

"STARK IS TOO WELL-KNOWN, TOO FAMOUS! THEY COULD CHECK OUT ANY LIE I TELL IN MINUTES, AND KNOW THAT I'M COVERING UP! THE VACATION ANGLE IS *OUT*... I'VE GOT TO SAY SOMETHING THEY CAN'T DISPROVE!"
AND SO...
HE SAID IT WAS A SECRET BUSINESS MATTER! HE WOULDN'T TELL ME *WHERE* HE WAS GOING!
I.. I SIMPLY CAN'T *BELIEVE* THAT!
HAPPY... WHAT IF IRON MAN *HIMSELF* HAS HARMED MR. STARK?? HOW WOULD WE EVER *KNOW?*
IF *ANYONE* COULD DO IT, *YOU* COULD!!
NO! YOU'RE *WRONG!*
I *SWEAR* TO YOU, I'VE DONE NOTHING TO HARM HIM! I'M AS ANXIOUS FOR HIM TO RETURN AS *YOU* ARE!
YEAH? WELL, YOU'RE NOT DOIN' MUCH TO *FIND* HIM! IF YOU EVER COME *OUT* OF THAT IRON SARDINE CAN, MISTER ...I'LL FIND A WAY TO *MAKE* YOU TALK!!
BE *CAREFUL*, HAPPY! DON'T GET HIM ANGRY! YOU KNOW HOW *DANGEROUS* HE CAN BE!!
SURE! SURE! BUT I JUST WANNA *WARN* YOU, FELLA! IF ANYTHING *HAPPENS* TO MR. STARK I'LL FIND OUT HOW, AND WHY, IF IT TAKES THE REST OF MY LIFE! DO YOU *READ* ME, TIN MAN?
IF ONLY I COULD TELL HIM THAT *I'M* STARK! IF I COULD TELL HOW TOUCHED I AM BY HIS LOYALTY!
HE'S *GONE!* OH, HAPPY... DO YOU REALLY THINK...?
I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO THINK, PEP! BUT THAT GUY'S *ALWAYS* BUGGED ME!
WHY DOES HE KEEP HIS IDENTITY A *SECRET?* WHAT'S HE *REALLY* AFTER??

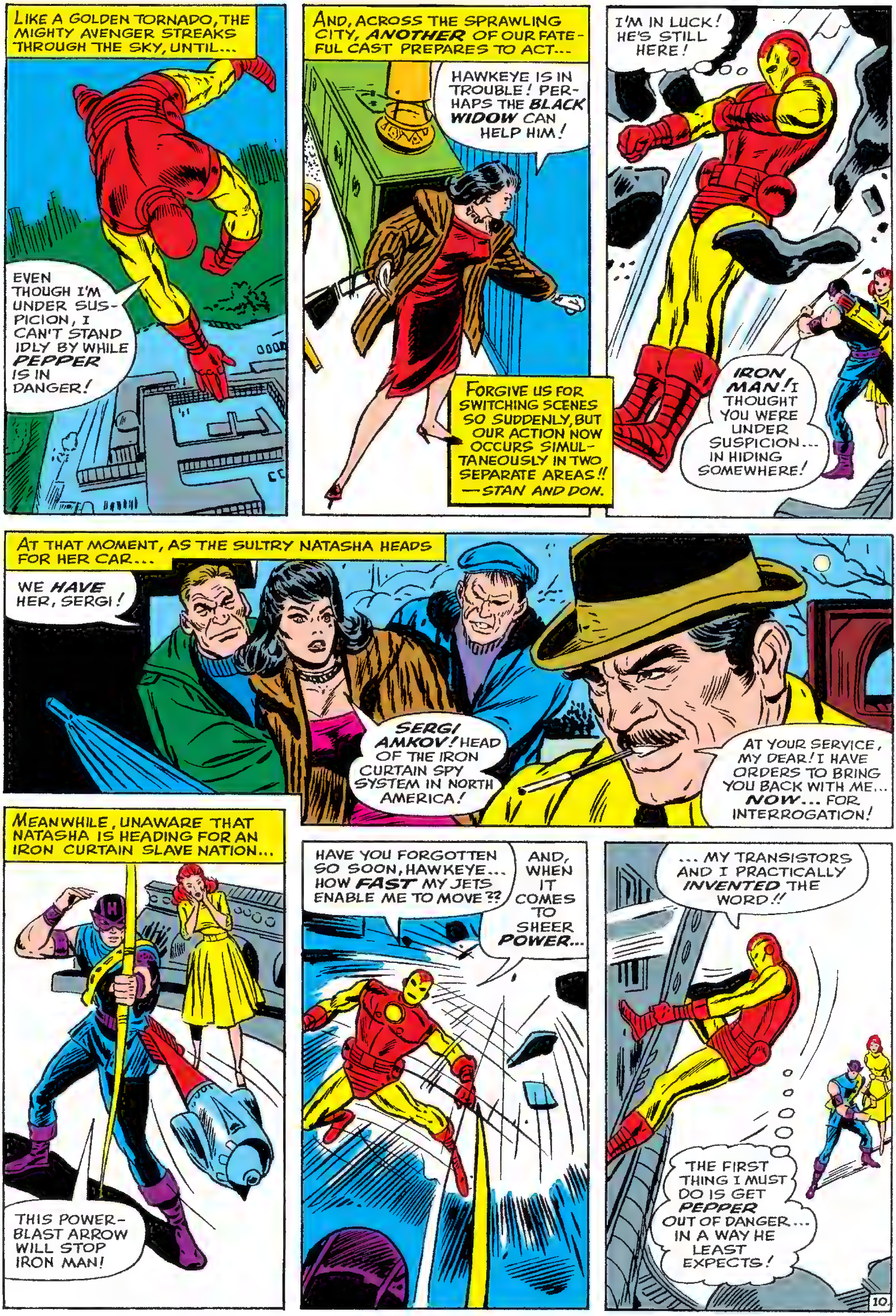

AND, WHY WOULD SOMEONE AS POWERFUL AS **IRON MAN** WORK FOR STARK ?? THE WHOLE SETUP ALWAYS SMELLED FISHY TO ME! I NEVER **DID** TRUST 'IM!
AND IN STARK'S PRIVATE OFFICE...
I'VE GOT AN IDEA! I'LL WRITE A **NOTE**...AND SIGN STARK'S NAME! PERHAPS **THAT** WILL MAKE THEM STOP WORRYING!
WHAT A FANTASTIC SITUATION! I **AM** TONY STARK...YET, I MUST ACT AS THOUGH WE'RE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE!
MY FUNDS ARE LOW! I'LL TAKE SOME CASH FROM MY SAFE!
BUT, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
LOOK! I WAS **RIGHT!** THERE'S ALL THE EVIDENCE YOU **NEED!** HE'S **ROBBIN' STARK'S SAFE!**
PEPPER! HAPPY! WITH THE **POLICE!**
I WAS A **FOOL** NOT TO LOCK THE DOOR!
KEEP BACK! THERE'S NO TELLING **WHAT** HE'LL DO WHEN HE'S CORNERED!
HE WON'T DO **ANYTHING**, LADY! NOT WITH **US** HERE!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT SOME **EXPLAINING** TO DO, IRON MAN!
I'VE GOT TO THINK **FAST!**
YOU CAN **SEE** THE SAFE WASN'T FORCED! MR. STARK HAD **GIVEN** ME THE COMBINATION! I HAVE HIS PERMISSION TO OPEN IT WHENEVER I WISH!
AND, IT'S A GOOD THING I **DID!**
I FOUND THIS **NOTE** INSIDE! HERE, READ IT FOR YOURSELVES!
IT SAYS THAT HE'S OFF ON A SECRET GOVERNMENT MISSION AND **I'M** IN CHARGE TILL HE RETURNS!
LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT IT, MISTER!

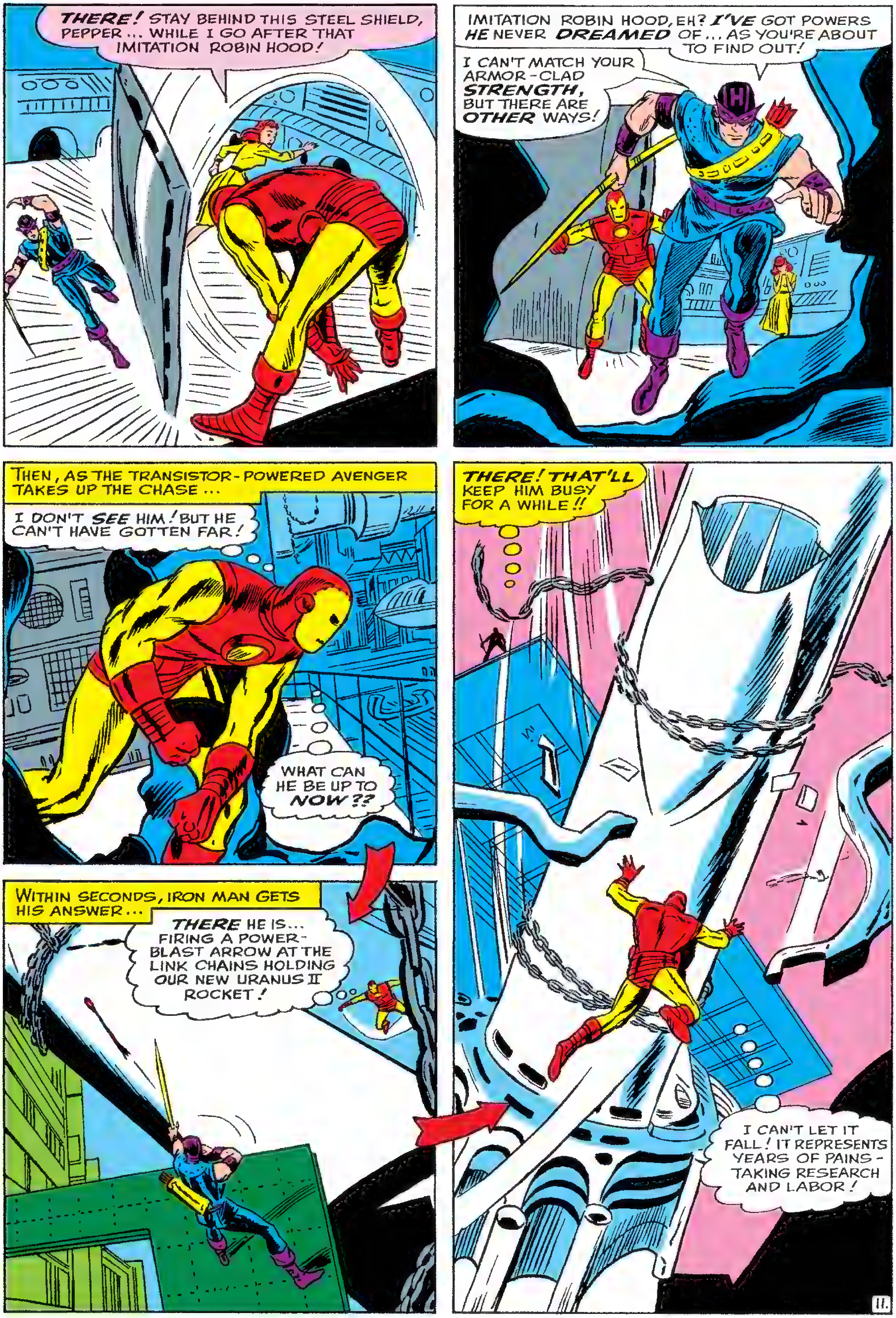

RUN THIS DOWN TO HEADQUARTERS ON THE DOUBLE, SMITH! WE'LL WAIT HERE!
on Man:
have to go
cret mission!
leave you
charge till
turn. Take
l the money
you need
Anthony
ark
MINUTES LATER, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, A NEW HANDWRITING ANALYSIS MACHINE IS PUT INTO INSTANT OPERATION....
THEN, FINALLY...
IT'S ODD, INSPECTOR! THERE ARE NO FINGERPRINTS ON THE NOTE.. AND THE HANDWRITING *IS* STARK'S, BUT IT SEEMS ODDLY *SHAKY!*
I SEE...!
IF STARK REALLY WROTE THAT NOTE, WHY AREN'T HIS *FINGERPRINTS* ON IT?
I'M GETTING TIRED OF ALL THESE QUESTIONS! EITHER FORMALLY *CHARGE* ME FOR A CRIME, OR...
ANOTHER MISTAKE! I FORGOT TO REMOVE MY IRON GLOVES! *THEY'RE* WHAT MADE MY WRITING SEEM SHAKY, TOO!
...I'LL PUT A *STOP* TO THEM... MY *OWN* WAY!
HE'S *ESCAPING!*
CRASH!
HOLD IT, MEN! SMALL ARMS FIRE CAN'T AFFECT HIS ARMOR! BESIDES, WE'VE STILL GOT NO DEFINITE PROOF THAT HE'S DONE ANYTHING WRONG!
AND WE CAN'T ARREST A MAN FOR A CRIME UNTIL WE'RE SURE A CRIME HAS BEEN *COMMITTED!*
WHAT DO I DO *NOW*? I'LL *REMAIN* UNDER SUSPICION UNTIL STARK APPEARS! AND HE *CAN'T* APPEAR AS LONG AS I DARE NOT REMOVE MY ARMOR!
WHAT DOES A MIGHTY *AVENGER* DO WHEN FACED WITH A HOPELESS PROBLEM? THE SAME AS ANYONE ELSE... HE SEEKS SOLITUDE... A QUIET PLACE TO THINK HIS TROUBLED THOUGHTS...! AND THEN...
I JUST REMEMBERED... A MEETING OF THE *AVENGERS* IS SCHEDULED FOR TONIGHT! I'LL HAVE TO CONTACT THEM!

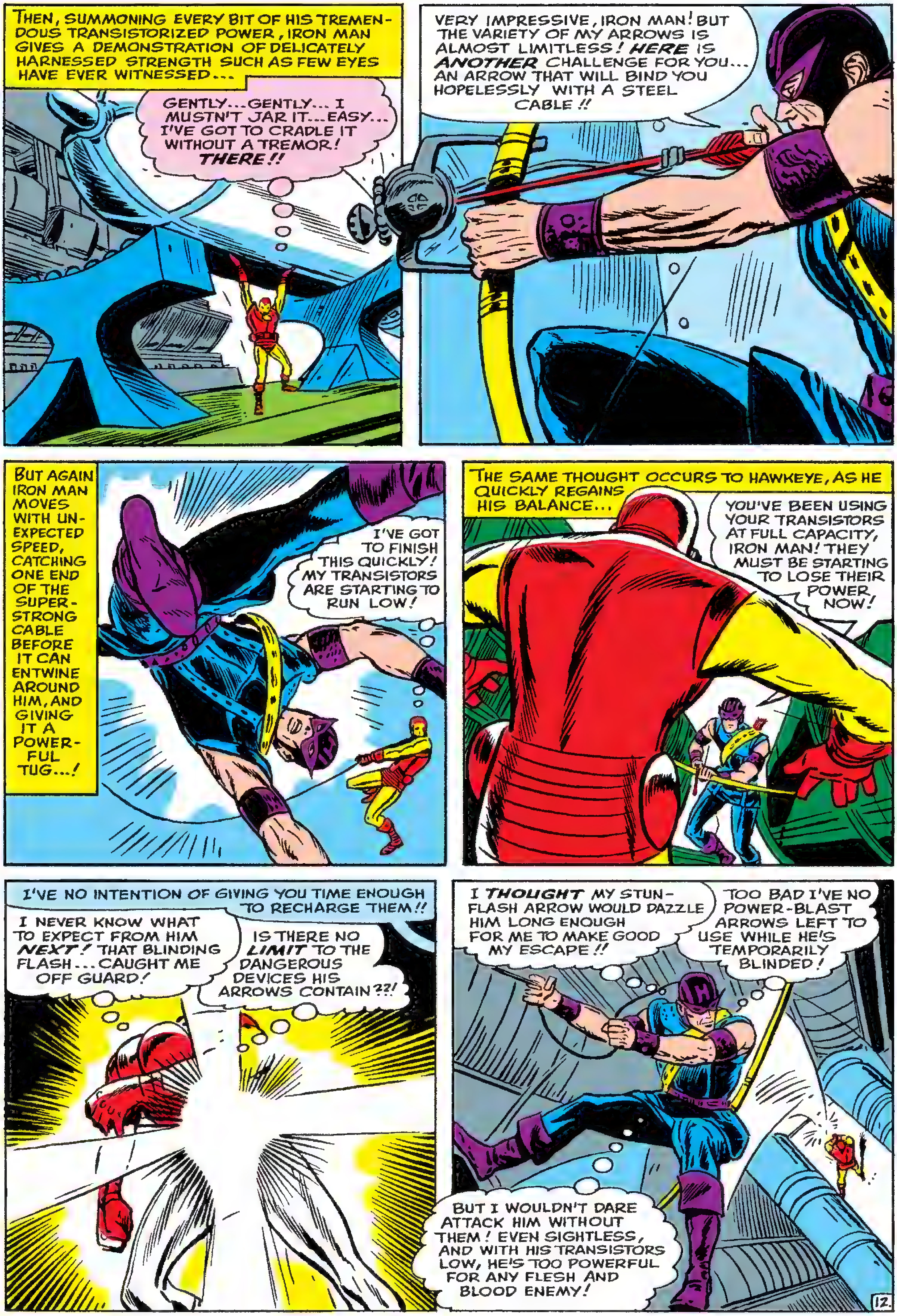

THEN, USING HIS BUILT-IN MINIATURIZED TWO-WAY RADIO, IRON MAN CONTACTS THE AVENGER-ON-DUTY IN THE HEART OF THE CITY...
PERMISSION REQUESTED TO BE ABSENT FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING!
PERMISSION GRANTED!
WE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ANTHONY STARK! THERE IS BUT ONE QUESTION I HAVE TO ASK... HAVE YOU BETRAYED HIM??
ON MY HONOR AS AN AVENGER, I HAVE NOT BETRAYED TONY STARK!
SO BE IT! WE EXPECT YOU TO LIFT THE CLOUD OF SUSPICION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! OVER AND OUT!
MEANWHILE, IN A LUXURIOUS SUBURB, JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY, TWO OTHERS EVINCE A GREAT INTEREST IN THE AFFAIRS OF IRON MAN!
WE WILL BRING ADDITIONAL BULLETINS ABOUT ANTHONY STARK'S DISAPPEARANCE AS THEY OCCUR! NOW WE RETURN TO...
DID YOU HEAR THAT, HAWKEYE? THE ACCURSED IRON MAN IS UNDER SUSPICION IN STARK'S DISAPPEARANCE!
I HEARD, NATASHA!
WITH IRON MAN GONE, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO RAID STARK'S FACTORY AGAIN, AND STEAL THE PLANS FOR HIS NEWEST WEAPONS!
I HAVE AGREED TO BE YOUR ALLY, MY LOVELY BLACK WIDOW... BUT MY HEART REBELS AT THE THOUGHT OF TREASON!
IT WILL NOT BE TREASON, MY BOLD HERO! I ONLY SERVE THE CAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE!
HE BELIEVES ANY LIE I TELL HIM!
STRONG AS HE IS, HE IS PUTTY IN THE HANDS OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
VERY WELL, MY DARLING... I'LL DO IT!
7.

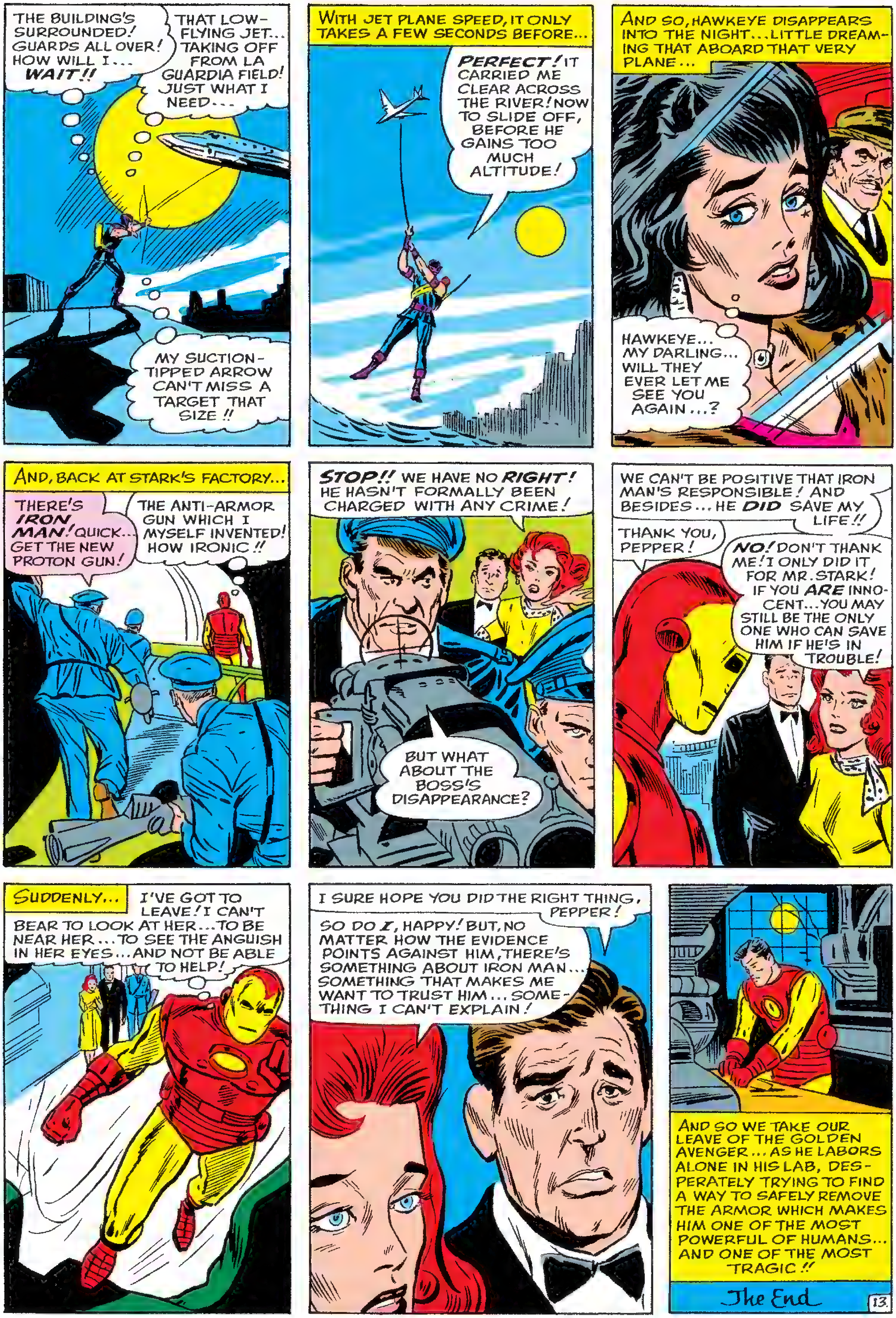

LATER...
NO PROTECTIVE FENCE CAN KEEP HAWKEYE OUT!
ORIGINALLY I PLANNED TO USE MY TALENTS TO SERVE MANKIND!! IF ONLY I HADN'T MET THE BLACK WIDOW!
AND YET... WITHOUT HER, LIFE WOULD BE MEANINGLESS TO ME!
BUT NOW I MUST CONCENTRATE ON THE JOB AT HAND!
SO FAR, SO GOOD! WAIT! I HEARD A FOOTSTEP BEHIND ME!
AN INTRUDER! THIS IS A CLASS "A" SECURITY SECTION! MY ORDERS ARE TO FIRE FIRST, AND ASK QUESTIONS AFTERWARDS!
I'LL GIVE HIM THE ONE NECESSARY WARNING SHOT, AND THEN, IF HE DOESN'T STOP...
I'VE BEEN SEEN!
HOLD YOUR FIRE! HE'S ENTERING MR. STARK'S PRIVATE OFFICE! HE'LL BE TRAPPED IN THERE!
BUT PEPPER POTTS IS INSIDE!!
STARK'S SECRETARY?? GOOD! SHE'LL SERVE AS A HOSTAGE FOR ME!


TURNING SUDDENLY, THE STARTLED GIRL RECOGNIZES THE COSTUMED CRIMINAL FROM IRON MAN'S DESCRIPTION OF THEIR PREVIOUS MEETING...*
HAWKEYE!! HOW DID YOU...?
NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS NOW! DO AS I SAY, AND YOU WON'T BE HARMED!
*SEE SUSPENSE #57...STAN.
UNLOCK STARK'S PRIVATE LAB DOOR! I KNOW YOU HAVE THE KEY!
ALL RIGHT...BUT IT'LL DO YOU NO GOOD!
I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT!
AND SO... MINUTES LATER...
NOTHING BUT MACHINES WHICH I CANNOT UNDERSTAND! NO PAPERS...NO PLANS... NOTHING I CAN TAKE WITH ME!!
I TRIED TO TELL YOU! MR. STARK KEEPS ALL HIS SECRET FORMULAE IN HIS HEAD! HE DOESN'T DARE TRUST THEM TO SAFES!
THAT'S WHY I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT HIM! WHAT IF SOMEONE CAPTURED HIM.. TOOK HIM TO AN UNFRIENDLY NATION...TO FORCE HIS SECRETS FROM HIM?!!
VERY WELL, THEN! MY NEXT PROBLEM IS ESCAPE! USE THAT COMMUNICATOR! ORDER THEM TO PLACE A SPEEDY CAR AT MY DISPOSAL!
NO! I WON'T! I WON'T!
BUT, PEPPER IS UNAWARE THAT THE COMMUNICATOR IS "ON", AND SO...
THAT'S A MIGHTY BRAVE GIRL!
LET HIM HAVE THE CAR, JACK! WE CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH PEPPER'S SAFETY!
I WON'T HELP A MENACE LIKE YOU TO ESCAPE!
WITHIN SECONDS, IRON MAN RECEIVES AN URGENT RADIO CALL...
GIANT-MAN CALLING! JUST HEARD A BULLETIN... HAWKEYE IS TRAPPED IN STARK'S FACTORY! HOLDING PEPPER HOSTAGE! SHOULD AVENGERS TAKE OVER?!
NO! HE MAY PANIC... HE MAY INJURE HER! I'LL DO IT ALONE... MY WAY! OVER... AND OUT!
W


LIKE A GOLDEN TORNADO, THE MIGHTY AVENGER STREAKS THROUGH THE SKY, UNTIL...
EVEN THOUGH I'M UNDER SUSPICION, I CAN'T STAND IDLY BY WHILE **PEPPER** IS IN DANGER!
AND, ACROSS THE SPRAWLING CITY, ***ANOTHER*** OF OUR FATEFUL CAST PREPARES TO ACT...
HAWKEYE IS IN TROUBLE! PERHAPS THE ***BLACK WIDOW*** CAN HELP HIM!
FORGIVE US FOR SWITCHING SCENES SO SUDDENLY, BUT OUR ACTION NOW OCCURS SIMULTANEOUSLY IN TWO SEPARATE AREAS!! —*STAN AND DON.*
I'M IN LUCK! HE'S STILL HERE!
IRON MAN! I THOUGHT YOU WERE UNDER SUSPICION... IN HIDING SOMEWHERE!
AT THAT MOMENT, AS THE SULTRY NATASHA HEADS FOR HER CAR...
WE ***HAVE*** HER, SERGI!
SERGI AMKOV! HEAD OF THE IRON CURTAIN SPY SYSTEM IN NORTH AMERICA!
AT YOUR SERVICE, MY DEAR! I HAVE ORDERS TO BRING YOU BACK WITH ME... ***NOW...*** FOR INTERROGATION!
MEANWHILE, UNAWARE THAT NATASHA IS HEADING FOR AN IRON CURTAIN SLAVE NATION...
THIS POWER-BLAST ARROW WILL STOP IRON MAN!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN SO SOON, HAWKEYE... HOW ***FAST*** MY JETS ENABLE ME TO MOVE??
AND, WHEN IT COMES TO SHEER ***POWER...***
... MY TRANSISTORS AND I PRACTICALLY ***INVENTED*** THE WORD!!
THE FIRST THING I MUST DO IS GET ***PEPPER*** OUT OF DANGER... IN A WAY HE LEAST EXPECTS!


THERE! STAY BEHIND THIS STEEL SHIELD, PEPPER ... WHILE I GO AFTER THAT IMITATION ROBIN HOOD!
IMITATION ROBIN HOOD, EH? I'VE GOT POWERS HE NEVER DREAMED OF ... AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT!
I CAN'T MATCH YOUR ARMOR-CLAD STRENGTH, BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS!
THEN, AS THE TRANSISTOR-POWERED AVENGER TAKES UP THE CHASE ...
I DON'T SEE HIM! BUT HE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR!
WHAT CAN HE BE UP TO NOW??
WITHIN SECONDS, IRON MAN GETS HIS ANSWER ...
THERE HE IS ... FIRING A POWER-BLAST ARROW AT THE LINK CHAINS HOLDING OUR NEW URANUS II ROCKET!
THERE! THAT'LL KEEP HIM BUSY FOR A WHILE!!
I CAN'T LET IT FALL! IT REPRESENTS YEARS OF PAINSTAKING RESEARCH AND LABOR!

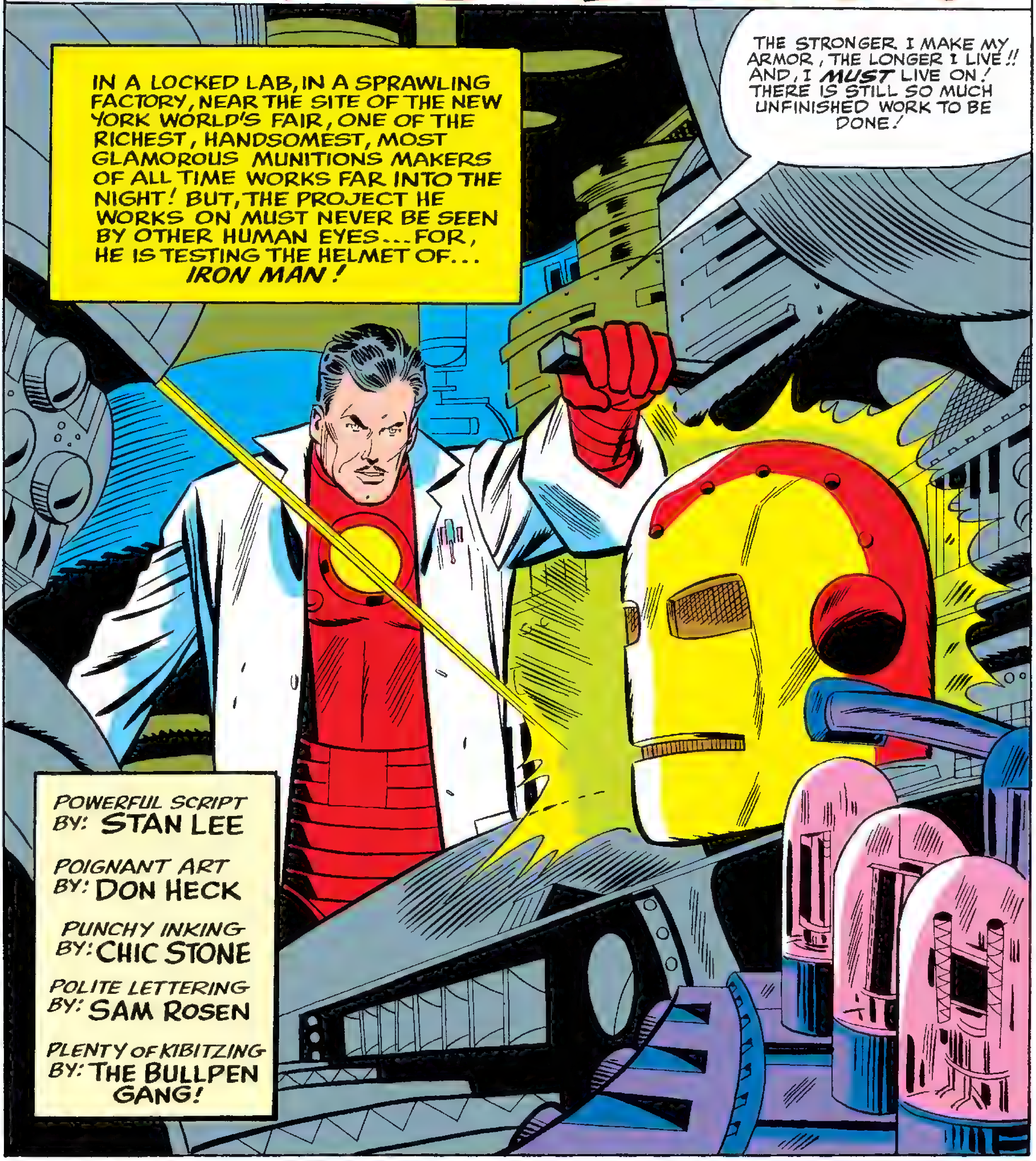

THEN, SUMMONING EVERY BIT OF HIS TREMENDOUS TRANSISTORIZED POWER, IRON MAN GIVES A DEMONSTRATION OF DELICATELY HARNESSED STRENGTH SUCH AS FEW EYES HAVE EVER WITNESSED...
GENTLY...GENTLY... I MUSTN'T JAR IT...EASY... I'VE GOT TO CRADLE IT WITHOUT A TREMOR! THERE!!
VERY IMPRESSIVE, IRON MAN! BUT THE VARIETY OF MY ARROWS IS ALMOST LIMITLESS! HERE IS ANOTHER CHALLENGE FOR YOU... AN ARROW THAT WILL BIND YOU HOPELESSLY WITH A STEEL CABLE!!
BUT AGAIN IRON MAN MOVES WITH UNEXPECTED SPEED, CATCHING ONE END OF THE SUPER-STRONG CABLE BEFORE IT CAN ENTWINE AROUND HIM, AND GIVING IT A POWERFUL TUG...!
I'VE GOT TO FINISH THIS QUICKLY! MY TRANSISTORS ARE STARTING TO RUN LOW!
THE SAME THOUGHT OCCURS TO HAWKEYE, AS HE QUICKLY REGAINS HIS BALANCE...
YOU'VE BEEN USING YOUR TRANSISTORS AT FULL CAPACITY, IRON MAN! THEY MUST BE STARTING TO LOSE THEIR POWER NOW!
I'VE NO INTENTION OF GIVING YOU TIME ENOUGH TO RECHARGE THEM!!
I NEVER KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HIM NEXT! THAT BLINDING FLASH... CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD!
IS THERE NO LIMIT TO THE DANGEROUS DEVICES HIS ARROWS CONTAIN??!
I THOUGHT MY STUN-FLASH ARROW WOULD DAZZLE HIM LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO MAKE GOOD MY ESCAPE!!
TOO BAD I'VE NO POWER-BLAST ARROWS LEFT TO USE WHILE HE'S TEMPORARILY BLINDED!
BUT I WOULDN'T DARE ATTACK HIM WITHOUT THEM! EVEN SIGHTLESS, AND WITH HIS TRANSISTORS LOW, HE'S TOO POWERFUL FOR ANY FLESH AND BLOOD ENEMY!

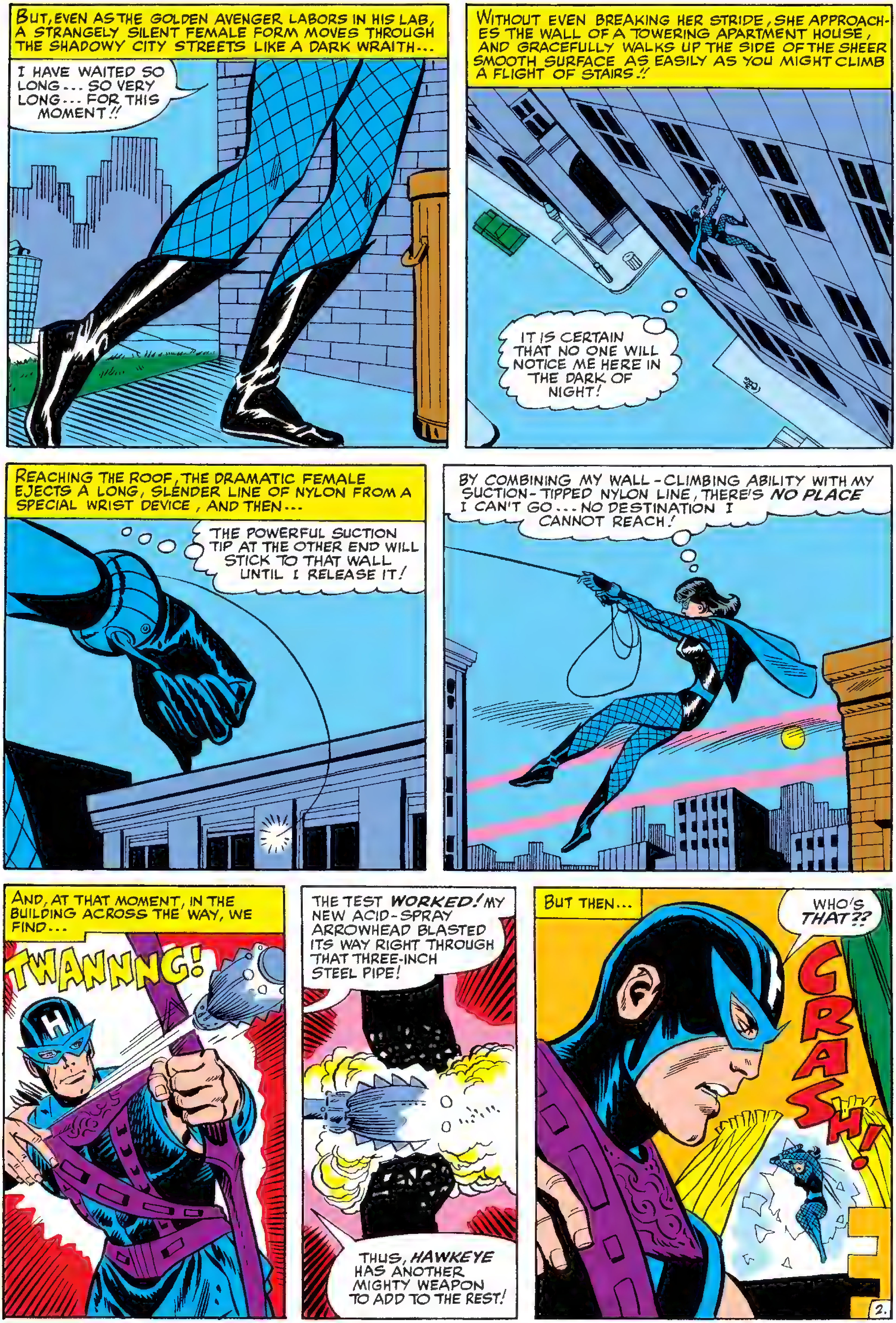

THE BUILDING'S SURROUNDED! GUARDS ALL OVER! HOW WILL I... WAIT!!
THAT LOW-FLYING JET... TAKING OFF FROM LA GUARDIA FIELD! JUST WHAT I NEED...
MY SUCTION-TIPPED ARROW CAN'T MISS A TARGET THAT SIZE!!
WITH JET PLANE SPEED, IT ONLY TAKES A FEW SECONDS BEFORE...
PERFECT! IT CARRIED ME CLEAR ACROSS THE RIVER! NOW TO SLIDE OFF, BEFORE HE GAINS TOO MUCH ALTITUDE!
AND SO, HAWKEYE DISAPPEARS INTO THE NIGHT... LITTLE DREAMING THAT ABOARD THAT VERY PLANE...
HAWKEYE... MY DARLING... WILL THEY EVER LET ME SEE YOU AGAIN...?
AND, BACK AT STARK'S FACTORY...
THERE'S IRON MAN! QUICK... GET THE NEW PROTON GUN!
THE ANTI-ARMOR GUN WHICH I MYSELF INVENTED! HOW IRONIC!!
STOP!! WE HAVE NO RIGHT! HE HASN'T FORMALLY BEEN CHARGED WITH ANY CRIME!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BOSS'S DISAPPEARANCE?
WE CAN'T BE POSITIVE THAT IRON MAN'S RESPONSIBLE! AND BESIDES... HE DID SAVE MY LIFE!!
THANK YOU, PEPPER!
NO! DON'T THANK ME! I ONLY DID IT FOR MR. STARK! IF YOU ARE INNOCENT... YOU MAY STILL BE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE HIM IF HE'S IN TROUBLE!
SUDDENLY...
I'VE GOT TO LEAVE! I CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK AT HER... TO BE NEAR HER... TO SEE THE ANGUISH IN HER EYES... AND NOT BE ABLE TO HELP!
I SURE HOPE YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, PEPPER!
SO DO I, HAPPY! BUT, NO MATTER HOW THE EVIDENCE POINTS AGAINST HIM, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT IRON MAN... SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME WANT TO TRUST HIM... SOMETHING I CAN'T EXPLAIN!
AND SO WE TAKE OUR LEAVE OF THE GOLDEN AVENGER... AS HE LABORS ALONE IN HIS LAB, DESPERATELY TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO SAFELY REMOVE THE ARMOR WHICH MAKES HIM ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL OF HUMANS... AND ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC!!
The End

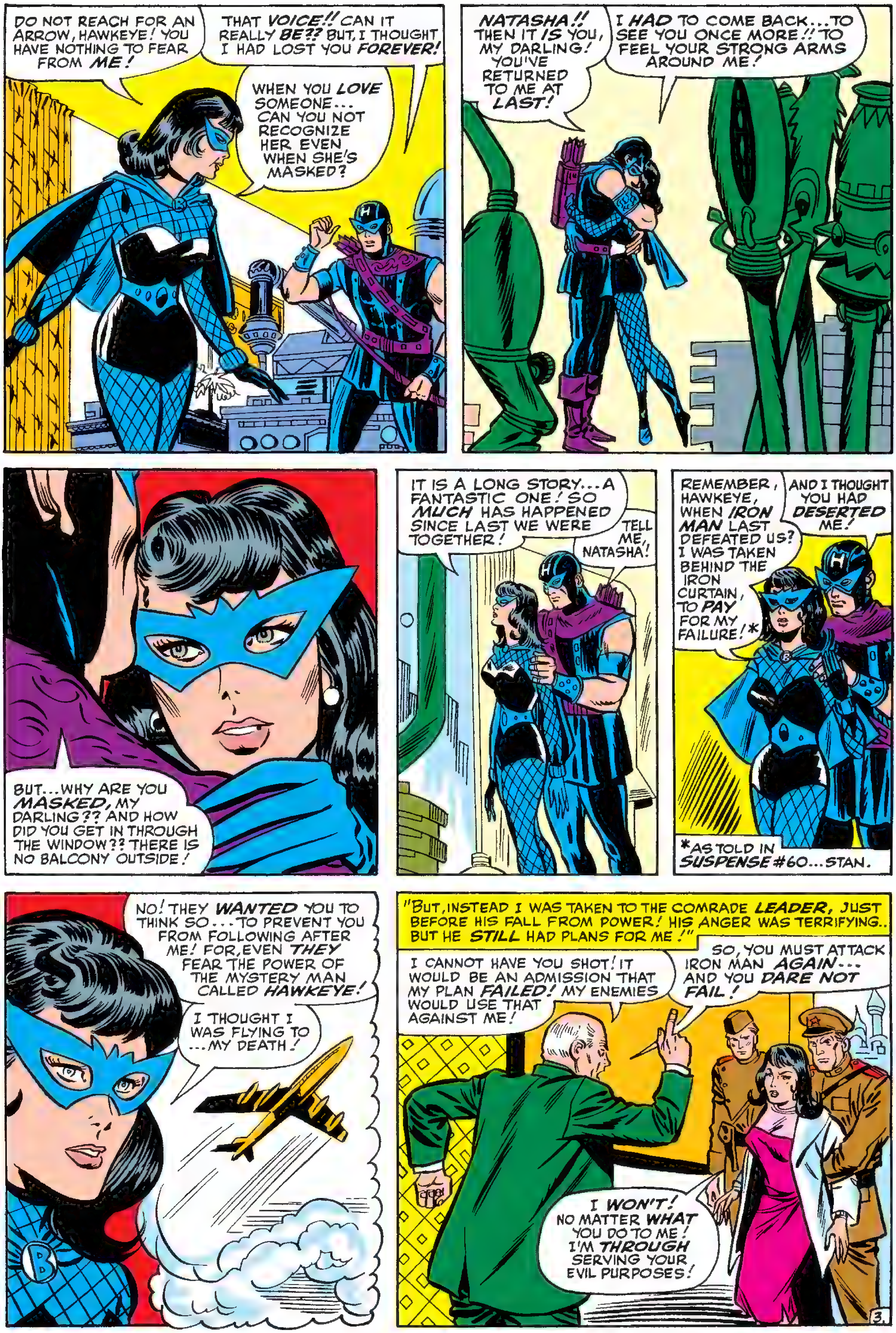
TALES OF SUSPENSE
featuring
IRON MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
64 APR
IND.
THE RETURN OF HAWKEYE AND THE NEW BLACK WIDOW
THE M.M.M.S. WANTS YOU!
SANDO And OMAR, TWO EERIE ENEMIES FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA'S DRAMATIC PAST!

IRON MAN

"HAWKEYE AND THE NEW BLACK WIDOW STRIKE AGAIN!"


IN A LOCKED LAB, IN A SPRAWLING FACTORY, NEAR THE SITE OF THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, ONE OF THE RICHEST, HANDSOMEST, MOST GLAMOROUS MUNITIONS MAKERS OF ALL TIME WORKS FAR INTO THE NIGHT! BUT, THE PROJECT HE WORKS ON MUST NEVER BE SEEN BY OTHER HUMAN EYES...FOR, HE IS TESTING THE HELMET OF... ***IRON MAN!***
THE STRONGER I MAKE MY ARMOR, THE LONGER I LIVE!! AND, I ***MUST*** LIVE ON! THERE IS STILL SO MUCH UNFINISHED WORK TO BE DONE!
POWERFUL SCRIPT BY: STAN LEE
POIGNANT ART BY: DON HECK
PUNCHY INKING BY: CHIC STONE
POLITE LETTERING BY: SAM ROSEN
PLENTY OF KIBITZING BY: THE BULLPEN GANG!


BUT, EVEN AS THE GOLDEN AVENGER LABORS IN HIS LAB, A STRANGELY SILENT FEMALE FORM MOVES THROUGH THE SHADOWY CITY STREETS LIKE A DARK WRAITH...
I HAVE WAITED SO LONG... SO VERY LONG... FOR THIS MOMENT!!
WITHOUT EVEN BREAKING HER STRIDE, SHE APPROACHES THE WALL OF A TOWERING APARTMENT HOUSE, AND GRACEFULLY WALKS UP THE SIDE OF THE SHEER SMOOTH SURFACE AS EASILY AS YOU MIGHT CLIMB A FLIGHT OF STAIRS!!
IT IS CERTAIN THAT NO ONE WILL NOTICE ME HERE IN THE DARK OF NIGHT!
REACHING THE ROOF, THE DRAMATIC FEMALE EJECTS A LONG, SLENDER LINE OF NYLON FROM A SPECIAL WRIST DEVICE, AND THEN...
THE POWERFUL SUCTION TIP AT THE OTHER END WILL STICK TO THAT WALL UNTIL I RELEASE IT!
BY COMBINING MY WALL-CLIMBING ABILITY WITH MY SUCTION-TIPPED NYLON LINE, THERE'S NO PLACE I CAN'T GO... NO DESTINATION I CANNOT REACH!
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE BUILDING ACROSS THE WAY, WE FIND...
TWANNNG!
H
THE TEST WORKED! MY NEW ACID-SPRAY ARROWHEAD BLASTED ITS WAY RIGHT THROUGH THAT THREE-INCH STEEL PIPE!
THUS, HAWKEYE HAS ANOTHER MIGHTY WEAPON TO ADD TO THE REST!
BUT THEN...
WHO'S THAT??
CRASH!
2.


DO NOT REACH FOR AN ARROW, HAWKEYE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME!
THAT VOICE!! CAN IT REALLY BE?? BUT, I THOUGHT I HAD LOST YOU FOREVER!
WHEN YOU LOVE SOMEONE... CAN YOU NOT RECOGNIZE HER EVEN WHEN SHE'S MASKED?
NATASHA!! THEN IT IS YOU, MY DARLING! YOU'VE RETURNED TO ME AT LAST!
I HAD TO COME BACK... TO SEE YOU ONCE MORE!! TO FEEL YOUR STRONG ARMS AROUND ME!
BUT... WHY ARE YOU MASKED, MY DARLING?? AND HOW DID YOU GET IN THROUGH THE WINDOW?? THERE IS NO BALCONY OUTSIDE!
IT IS A LONG STORY... A FANTASTIC ONE! SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE LAST WE WERE TOGETHER!
TELL ME, NATASHA!
REMEMBER, HAWKEYE, WHEN IRON MAN LAST DEFEATED US? I WAS TAKEN BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, TO PAY FOR MY FAILURE!*
AND I THOUGHT YOU HAD DESERTED ME!
*AS TOLD IN SUSPENSE #60... STAN.
NO! THEY WANTED YOU TO THINK SO... TO PREVENT YOU FROM FOLLOWING AFTER ME! FOR, EVEN THEY FEAR THE POWER OF THE MYSTERY MAN CALLED HAWKEYE!
I THOUGHT I WAS FLYING TO... MY DEATH!
"BUT, INSTEAD I WAS TAKEN TO THE COMRADE LEADER, JUST BEFORE HIS FALL FROM POWER! HIS ANGER WAS TERRIFYING.. BUT HE STILL HAD PLANS FOR ME!"
I CANNOT HAVE YOU SHOT! IT WOULD BE AN ADMISSION THAT MY PLAN FAILED! MY ENEMIES WOULD USE THAT AGAINST ME!
SO, YOU MUST ATTACK IRON MAN AGAIN... AND YOU DARE NOT FAIL!
I WON'T! NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO ME! I'M THROUGH SERVING YOUR EVIL PURPOSES!
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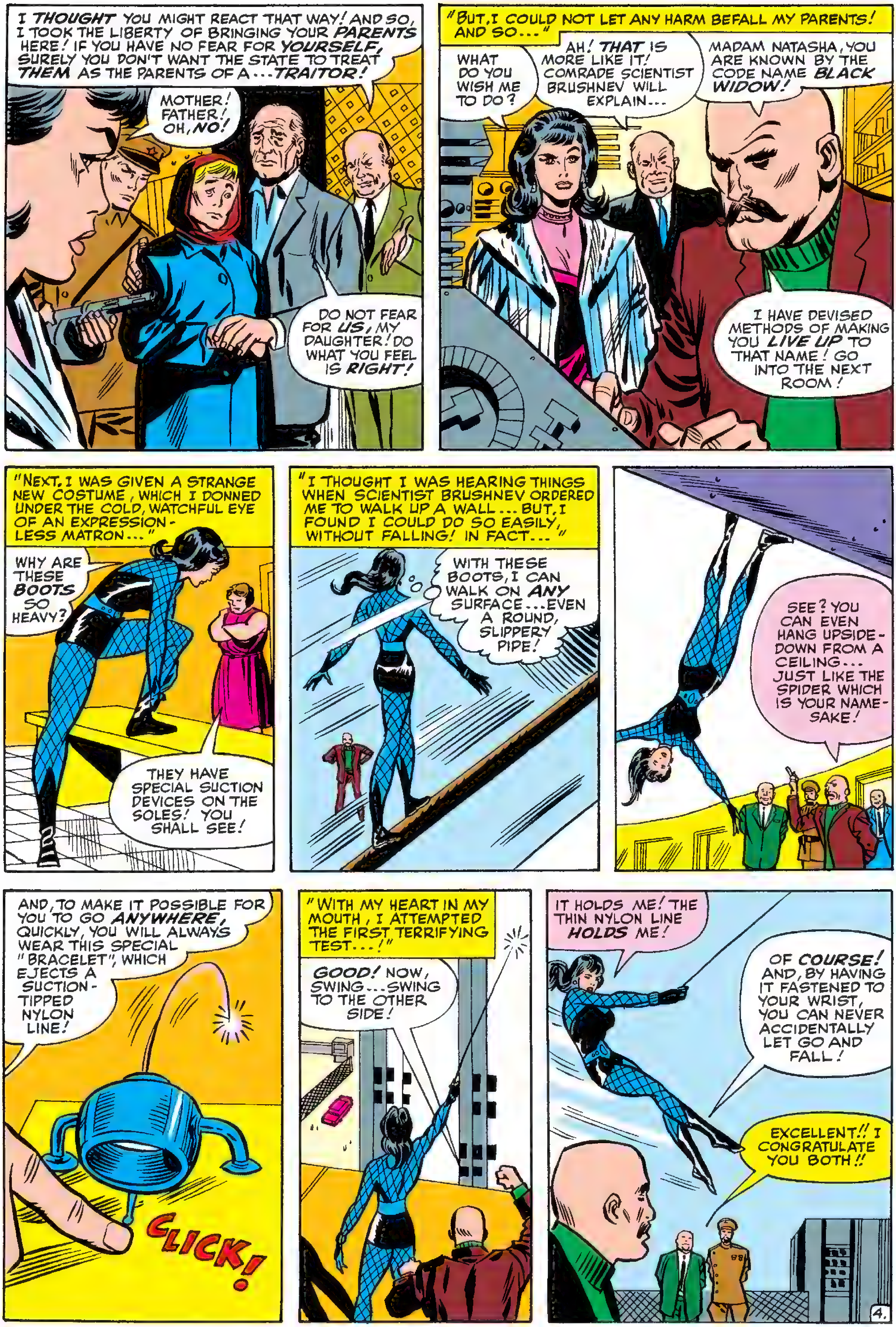
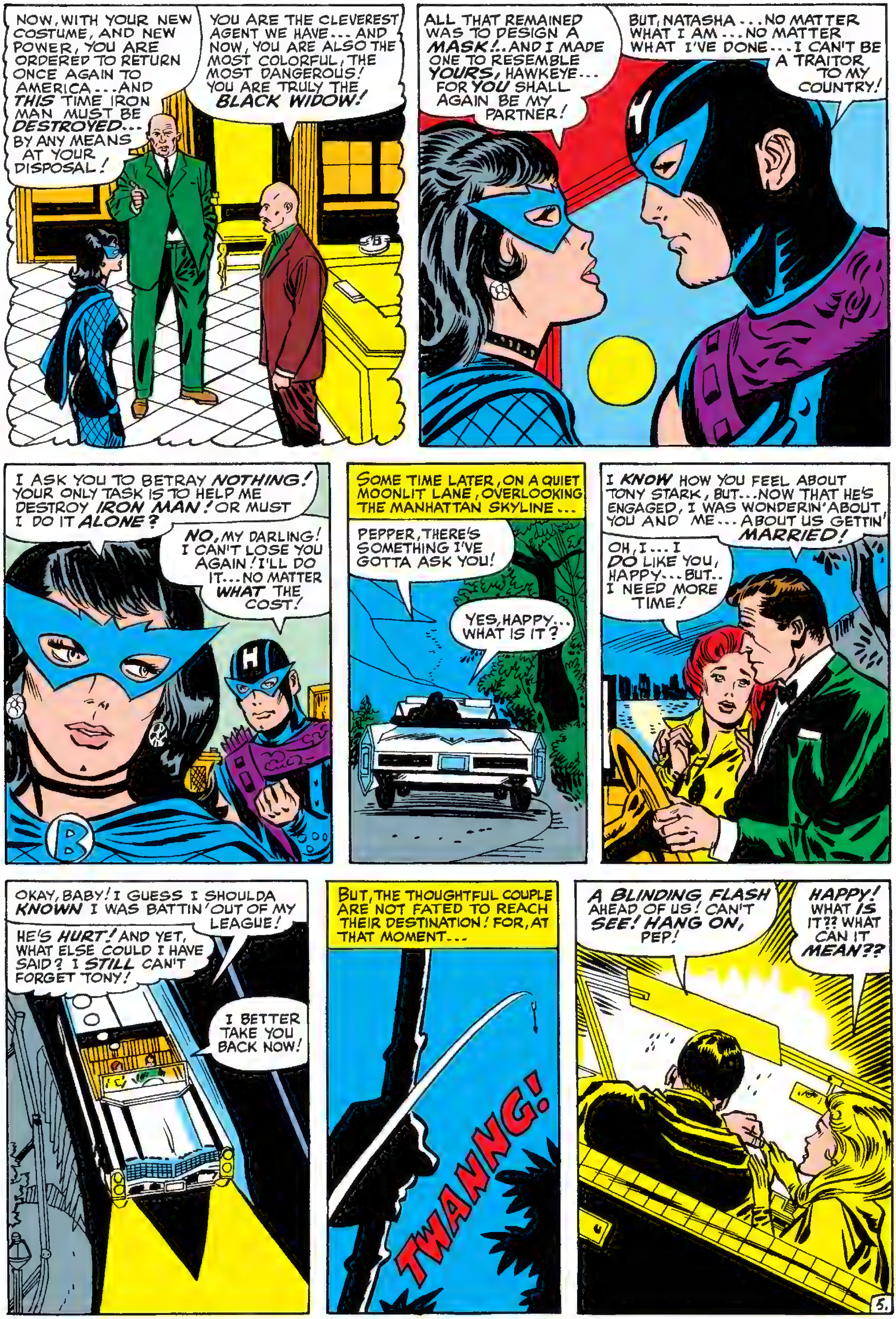
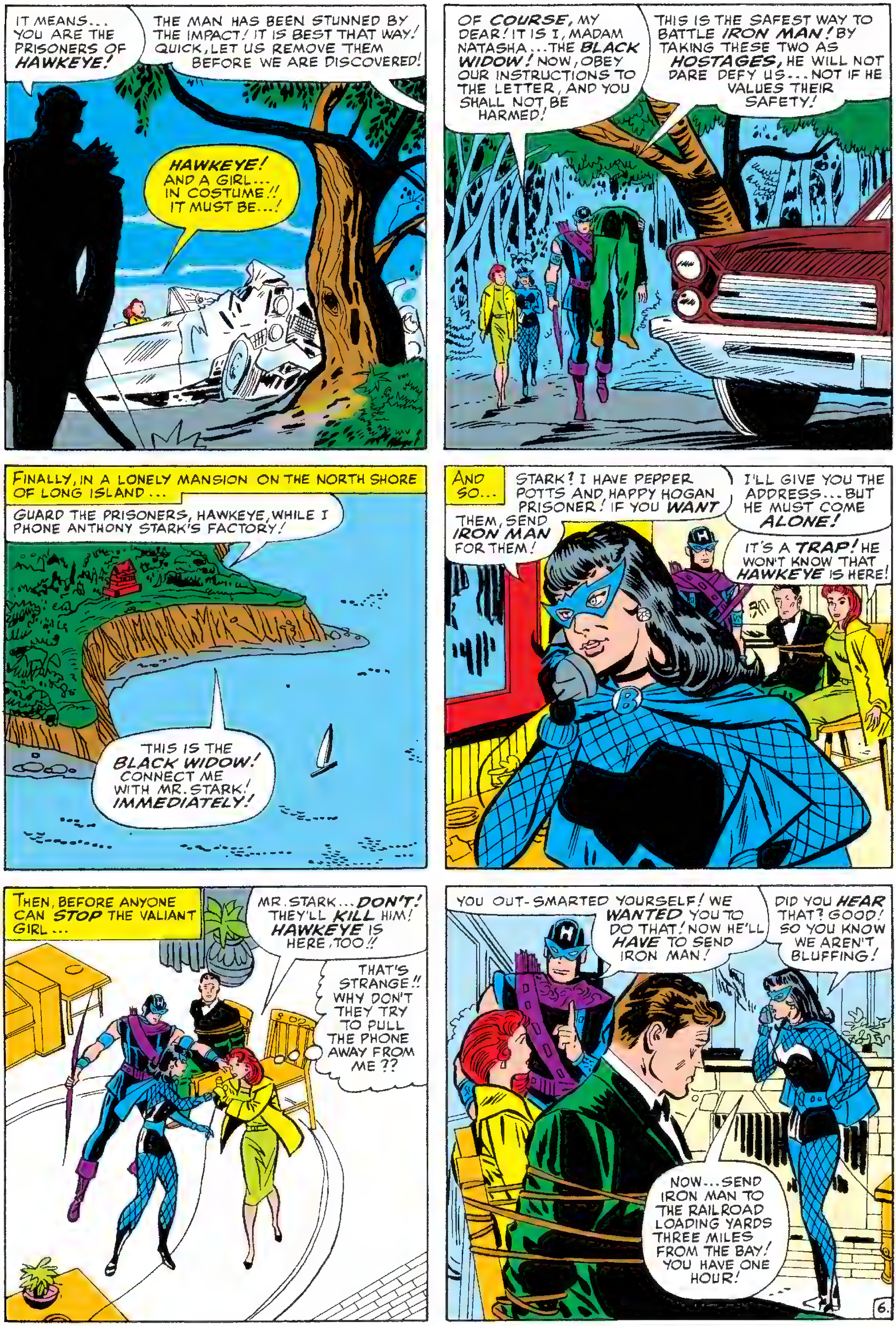
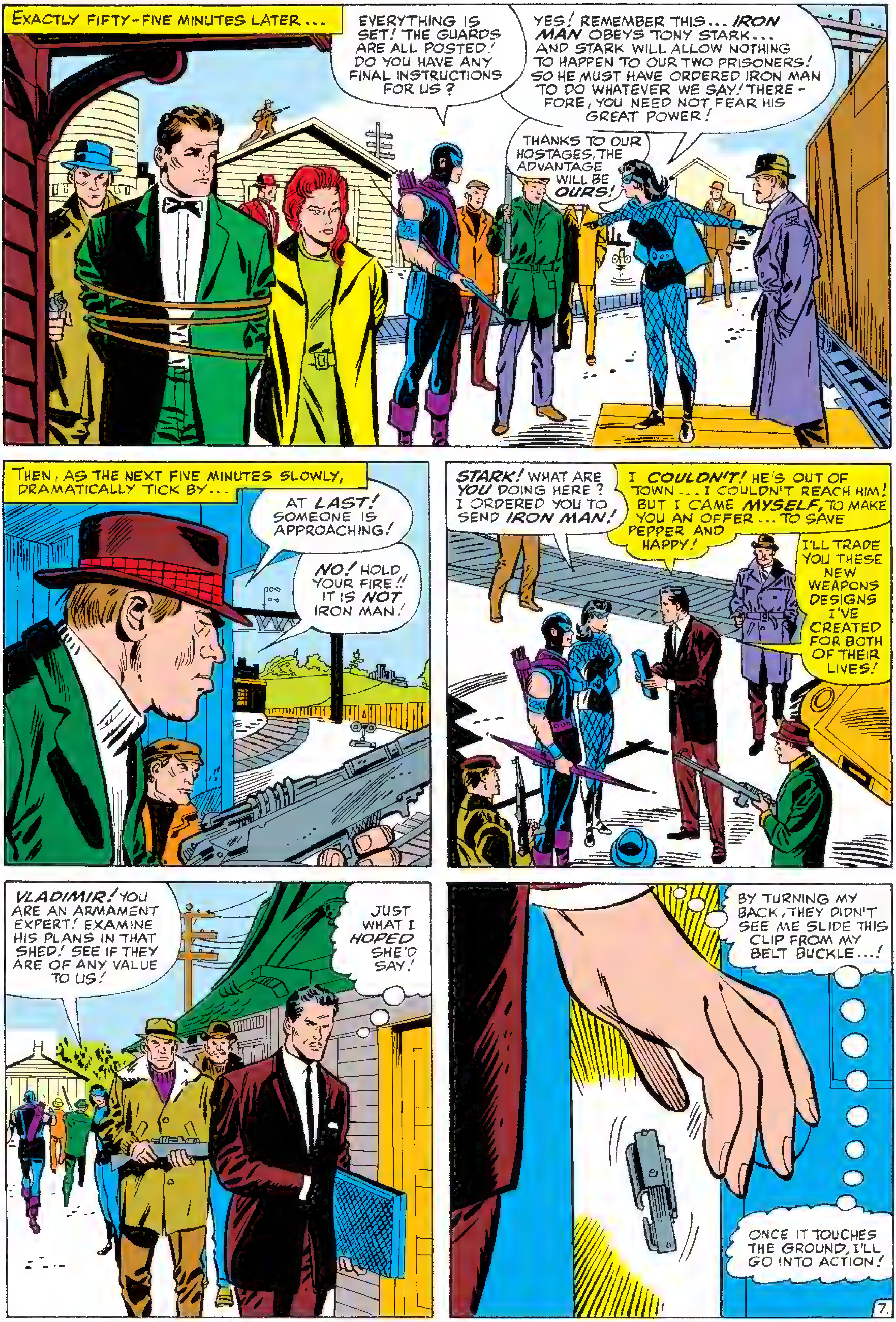
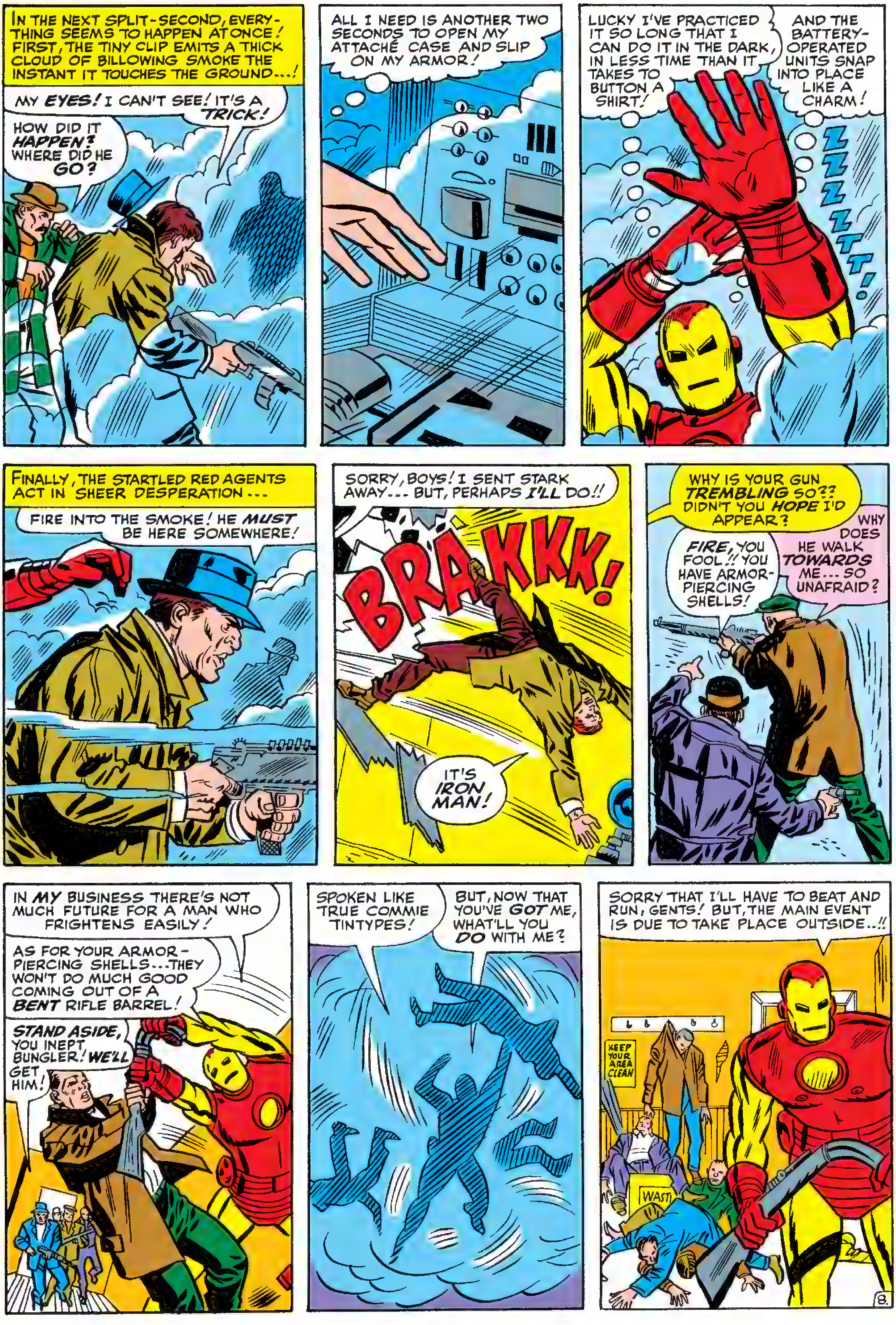
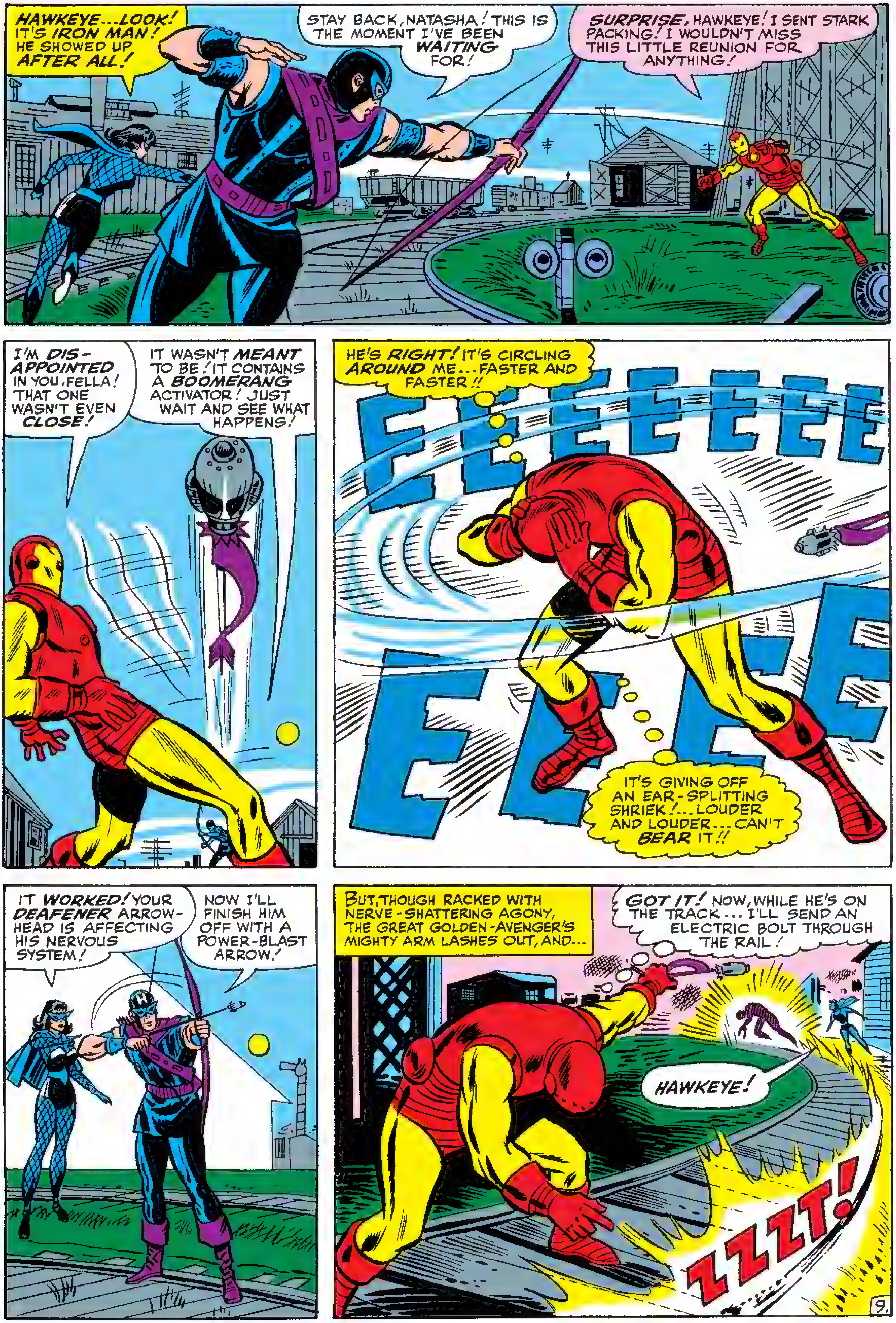

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT REACT THAT WAY! AND SO, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF BRINGING YOUR PARENTS HERE! IF YOU HAVE NO FEAR FOR YOURSELF, SURELY YOU DON'T WANT THE STATE TO TREAT THEM AS THE PARENTS OF A...TRAITOR!
MOTHER! FATHER! OH, NO!
DO NOT FEAR FOR US, MY DAUGHTER! DO WHAT YOU FEEL IS RIGHT!
"BUT, I COULD NOT LET ANY HARM BEFALL MY PARENTS! AND SO..."
WHAT DO YOU WISH ME TO DO?
AH! THAT IS MORE LIKE IT! COMRADE SCIENTIST BRUSHNEV WILL EXPLAIN...
MADAM NATASHA, YOU ARE KNOWN BY THE CODE NAME BLACK WIDOW!
I HAVE DEVISED METHODS OF MAKING YOU LIVE UP TO THAT NAME! GO INTO THE NEXT ROOM!
"NEXT, I WAS GIVEN A STRANGE NEW COSTUME, WHICH I DONNED UNDER THE COLD, WATCHFUL EYE OF AN EXPRESSIONLESS MATRON..."
WHY ARE THESE BOOTS SO HEAVY?
THEY HAVE SPECIAL SUCTION DEVICES ON THE SOLES! YOU SHALL SEE!
"I THOUGHT I WAS HEARING THINGS WHEN SCIENTIST BRUSHNEV ORDERED ME TO WALK UP A WALL... BUT, I FOUND I COULD DO SO EASILY, WITHOUT FALLING! IN FACT..."
WITH THESE BOOTS, I CAN WALK ON ANY SURFACE...EVEN A ROUND, SLIPPERY PIPE!
SEE? YOU CAN EVEN HANG UPSIDE-DOWN FROM A CEILING... JUST LIKE THE SPIDER WHICH IS YOUR NAMESAKE!
AND, TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO GO ANYWHERE, QUICKLY, YOU WILL ALWAYS WEAR THIS SPECIAL "BRACELET", WHICH EJECTS A SUCTION-TIPPED NYLON LINE!
CLICK!
"WITH MY HEART IN MY MOUTH, I ATTEMPTED THE FIRST TERRIFYING TEST...!"
GOOD! NOW, SWING...SWING TO THE OTHER SIDE!
IT HOLDS ME! THE THIN NYLON LINE HOLDS ME!
OF COURSE! AND, BY HAVING IT FASTENED TO YOUR WRIST, YOU CAN NEVER ACCIDENTALLY LET GO AND FALL!
EXCELLENT!! I CONGRATULATE YOU BOTH!!

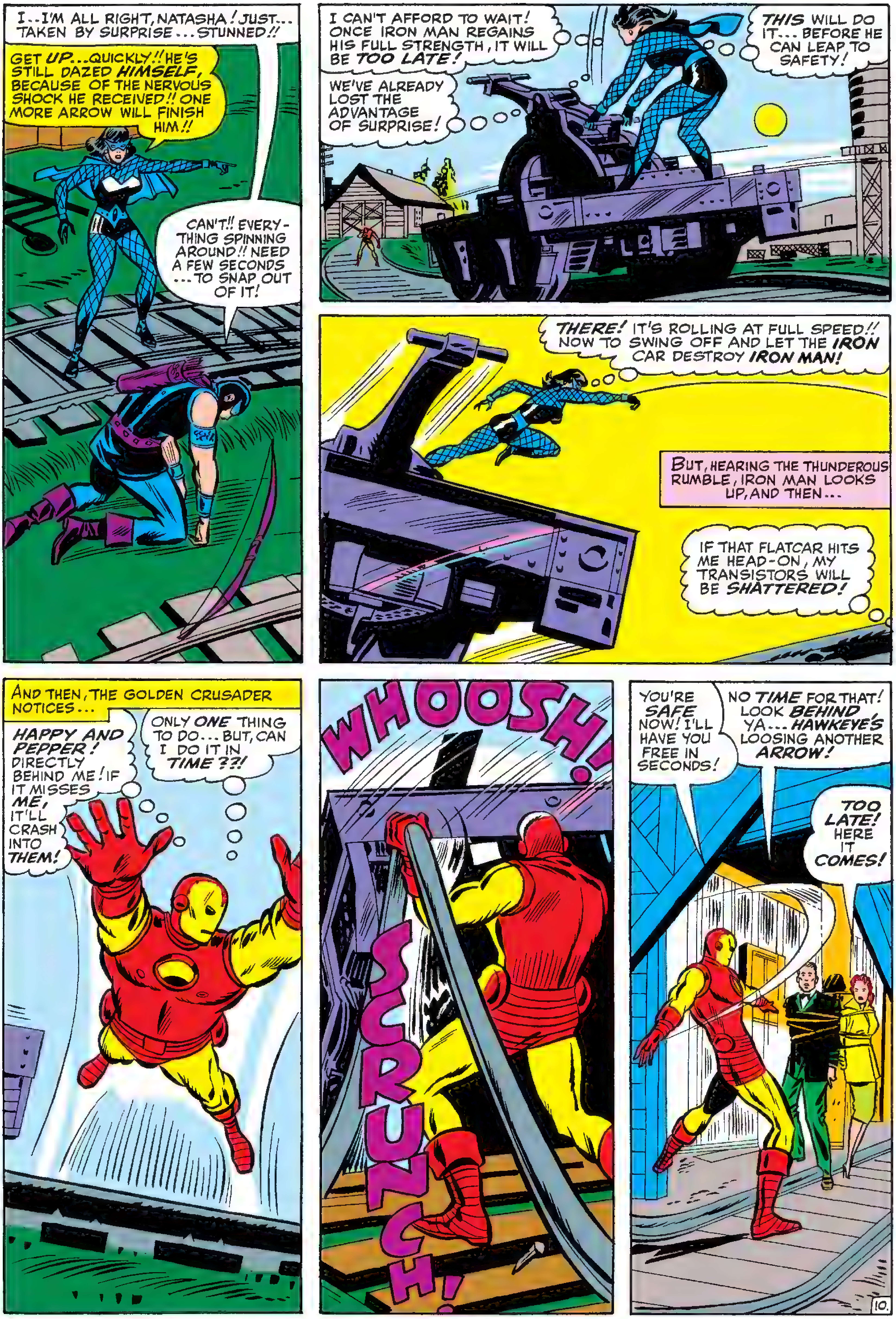

NOW, WITH YOUR NEW COSTUME, AND NEW POWER, YOU ARE ORDERED TO RETURN ONCE AGAIN TO AMERICA...AND THIS TIME IRON MAN MUST BE DESTROYED... BY ANY MEANS AT YOUR DISPOSAL!
YOU ARE THE CLEVEREST AGENT WE HAVE... AND NOW, YOU ARE ALSO THE MOST COLORFUL, THE MOST DANGEROUS! YOU ARE TRULY THE BLACK WIDOW!
ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO DESIGN A MASK!..AND I MADE ONE TO RESEMBLE YOURS, HAWKEYE... FOR YOU SHALL AGAIN BE MY PARTNER!
BUT, NATASHA...NO MATTER WHAT I AM...NO MATTER WHAT I'VE DONE...I CAN'T BE A TRAITOR TO MY COUNTRY!
I ASK YOU TO BETRAY NOTHING! YOUR ONLY TASK IS TO HELP ME DESTROY IRON MAN! OR MUST I DO IT ALONE?
NO, MY DARLING! I CAN'T LOSE YOU AGAIN! I'LL DO IT...NO MATTER WHAT THE COST!
B
SOME TIME LATER, ON A QUIET MOONLIT LANE, OVERLOOKING THE MANHATTAN SKYLINE...
PEPPER, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE GOTTA ASK YOU!
YES, HAPPY... WHAT IS IT?
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT TONY STARK, BUT...NOW THAT HE'S ENGAGED, I WAS WONDERIN' ABOUT YOU AND ME... ABOUT US GETTIN' MARRIED!
OH, I... I DO LIKE YOU, HAPPY... BUT.. I NEED MORE TIME!
OKAY, BABY! I GUESS I SHOULDA KNOWN I WAS BATTIN' OUT OF MY LEAGUE!
HE'S HURT! AND YET, WHAT ELSE COULD I HAVE SAID? I STILL CAN'T FORGET TONY!
I BETTER TAKE YOU BACK NOW!
BUT, THE THOUGHTFUL COUPLE ARE NOT FATED TO REACH THEIR DESTINATION! FOR, AT THAT MOMENT...
TWANNG!
A BLINDING FLASH AHEAD OF US! CAN'T SEE! HANG ON, PEP!
HAPPY! WHAT IS IT?? WHAT CAN IT MEAN??

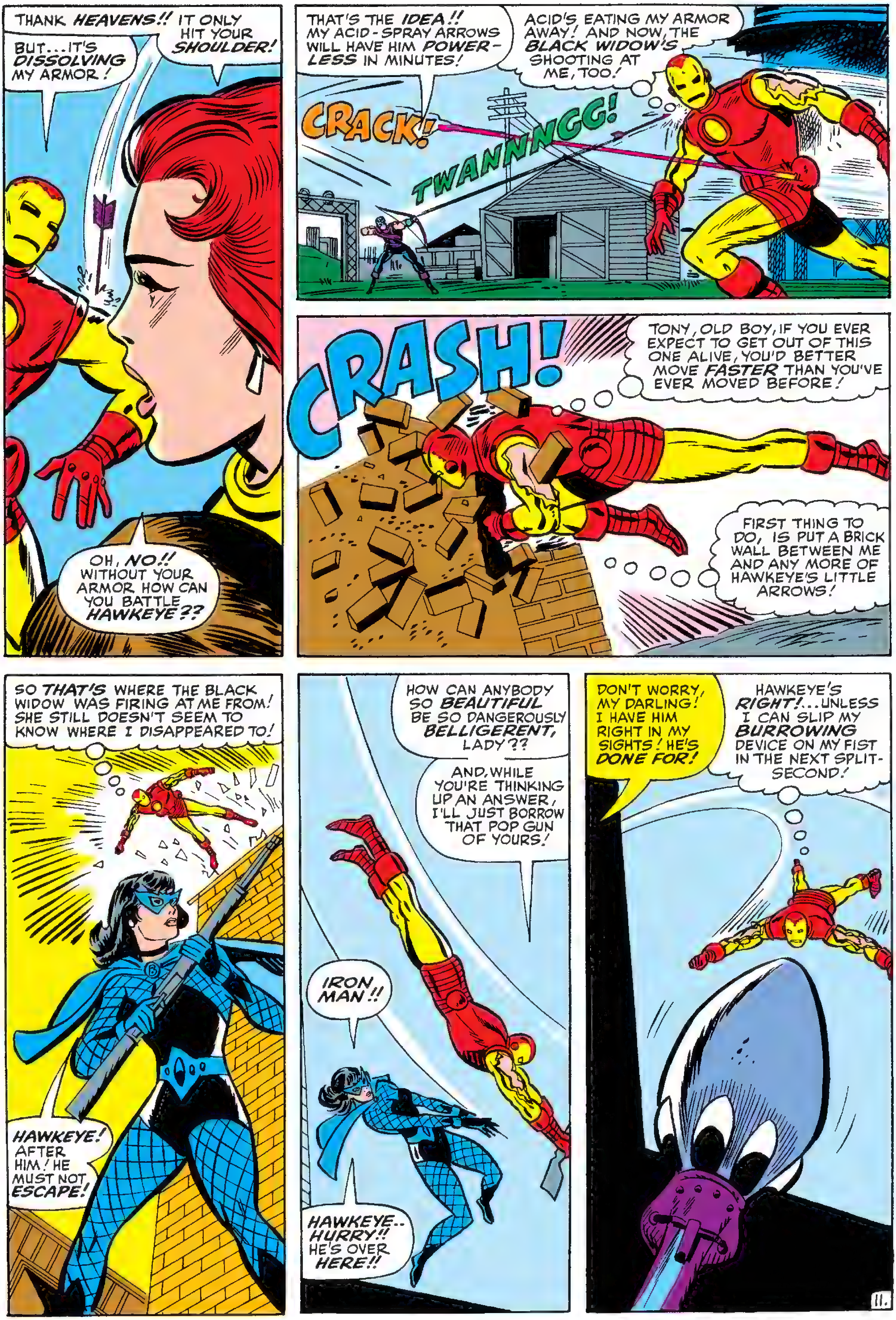

IT MEANS... YOU ARE THE PRISONERS OF HAWKEYE!
THE MAN HAS BEEN STUNNED BY THE IMPACT! IT IS BEST THAT WAY! QUICK, LET US REMOVE THEM BEFORE WE ARE DISCOVERED!
HAWKEYE! AND A GIRL... IN COSTUME!! IT MUST BE...!
OF COURSE, MY DEAR! IT IS I, MADAM NATASHA... THE BLACK WIDOW! NOW, OBEY OUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER, AND YOU SHALL NOT BE HARMED!
THIS IS THE SAFEST WAY TO BATTLE IRON MAN! BY TAKING THESE TWO AS HOSTAGES, HE WILL NOT DARE DEFY US... NOT IF HE VALUES THEIR SAFETY!
FINALLY, IN A LONELY MANSION ON THE NORTH SHORE OF LONG ISLAND...
GUARD THE PRISONERS, HAWKEYE, WHILE I PHONE ANTHONY STARK'S FACTORY!
THIS IS THE BLACK WIDOW! CONNECT ME WITH MR. STARK! IMMEDIATELY!
AND SO...
STARK? I HAVE PEPPER POTTS AND HAPPY HOGAN PRISONER! IF YOU WANT THEM, SEND IRON MAN FOR THEM!
I'LL GIVE YOU THE ADDRESS... BUT HE MUST COME ALONE!
IT'S A TRAP! HE WON'T KNOW THAT HAWKEYE IS HERE!
THEN, BEFORE ANYONE CAN STOP THE VALIANT GIRL...
MR. STARK... DON'T! THEY'LL KILL HIM! HAWKEYE IS HERE, TOO!!
THAT'S STRANGE!! WHY DON'T THEY TRY TO PULL THE PHONE AWAY FROM ME ??
YOU OUT-SMARTED YOURSELF! WE WANTED YOU TO DO THAT! NOW HE'LL HAVE TO SEND IRON MAN!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? GOOD! SO YOU KNOW WE AREN'T BLUFFING!
NOW... SEND IRON MAN TO THE RAILROAD LOADING YARDS THREE MILES FROM THE BAY! YOU HAVE ONE HOUR!
6.

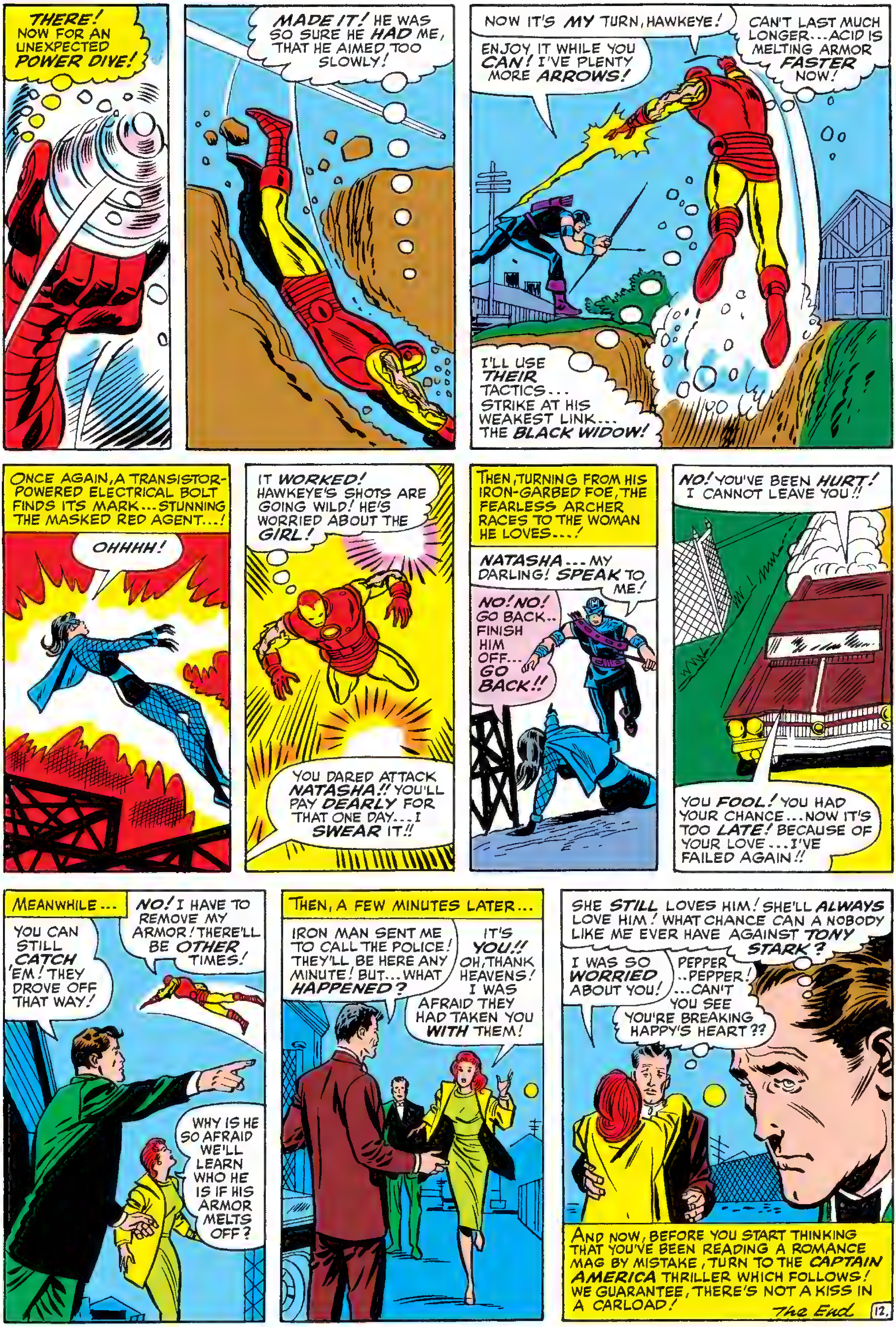

EXACTLY FIFTY-FIVE MINUTES LATER...
EVERYTHING IS SET! THE GUARDS ARE ALL POSTED! DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR US?
YES! REMEMBER THIS... IRON MAN OBEYS TONY STARK... AND STARK WILL ALLOW NOTHING TO HAPPEN TO OUR TWO PRISONERS! SO HE MUST HAVE ORDERED IRON MAN TO DO WHATEVER WE SAY! THEREFORE, YOU NEED NOT FEAR HIS GREAT POWER!
THANKS TO OUR HOSTAGES, THE ADVANTAGE WILL BE OURS!
THEN, AS THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES SLOWLY, DRAMATICALLY TICK BY...
AT LAST! SOMEONE IS APPROACHING!
NO! HOLD YOUR FIRE!! IT IS NOT IRON MAN!
STARK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I ORDERED YOU TO SEND IRON MAN!
I COULDN'T! HE'S OUT OF TOWN... I COULDN'T REACH HIM! BUT I CAME MYSELF, TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER... TO SAVE PEPPER AND HAPPY!
I'LL TRADE YOU THESE NEW WEAPONS DESIGNS I'VE CREATED FOR BOTH OF THEIR LIVES!
VLADIMIR! YOU ARE AN ARMAMENT EXPERT! EXAMINE HIS PLANS IN THAT SHED! SEE IF THEY ARE OF ANY VALUE TO US!
JUST WHAT I HOPED SHE'D SAY!
BY TURNING MY BACK, THEY DIDN'T SEE ME SLIDE THIS CLIP FROM MY BELT BUCKLE...!
ONCE IT TOUCHES THE GROUND, I'LL GO INTO ACTION!


IN THE NEXT SPLIT-SECOND, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO HAPPEN AT ONCE! FIRST, THE TINY CLIP EMITS A THICK CLOUD OF BILLOWING SMOKE THE INSTANT IT TOUCHES THE GROUND...!
MY EYES! I CAN'T SEE! IT'S A TRICK!
HOW DID IT HAPPEN? WHERE DID HE GO?
ALL I NEED IS ANOTHER TWO SECONDS TO OPEN MY ATTACHÉ CASE AND SLIP ON MY ARMOR!
LUCKY I'VE PRACTICED IT SO LONG THAT I CAN DO IT IN THE DARK, IN LESS TIME THAN IT TAKES TO BUTTON A SHIRT!
AND THE BATTERY-OPERATED UNITS SNAP INTO PLACE LIKE A CHARM!
ZZZZTT!
FINALLY, THE STARTLED RED AGENTS ACT IN SHEER DESPERATION...
FIRE INTO THE SMOKE! HE MUST BE HERE SOMEWHERE!
SORRY, BOYS! I SENT STARK AWAY... BUT, PERHAPS I'LL DO!!
BRAKKK!
IT'S IRON MAN!
WHY IS YOUR GUN TREMBLING SO?? DIDN'T YOU HOPE I'D APPEAR?
FIRE, YOU FOOL!! YOU HAVE ARMOR-PIERCING SHELLS!
WHY DOES HE WALK TOWARDS ME... SO UNAFRAID?
IN MY BUSINESS THERE'S NOT MUCH FUTURE FOR A MAN WHO FRIGHTENS EASILY!
AS FOR YOUR ARMOR-PIERCING SHELLS... THEY WON'T DO MUCH GOOD COMING OUT OF A BENT RIFLE BARREL!
STAND ASIDE, YOU INEPT BUNGLER! WE'LL GET HIM!
SPOKEN LIKE TRUE COMMIE TINTYPES!
BUT, NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT ME, WHAT'LL YOU DO WITH ME?
SORRY THAT I'LL HAVE TO BEAT AND RUN, GENTS! BUT, THE MAIN EVENT IS DUE TO TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE..!!
KEEP YOUR AREA CLEAN
WASTE

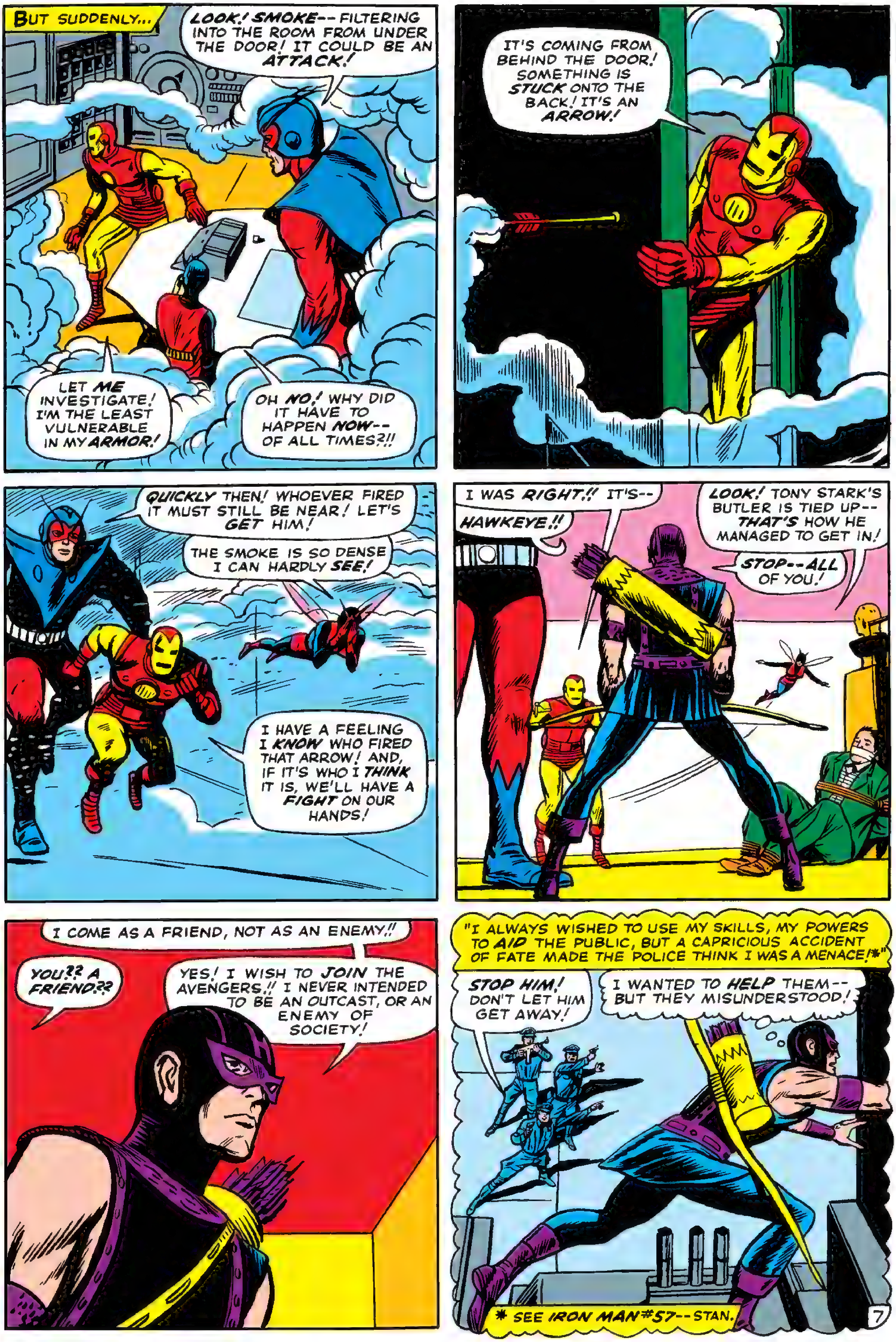

HAWKEYE...LOOK! IT'S IRON MAN! HE SHOWED UP AFTER ALL!
STAY BACK, NATASHA! THIS IS THE MOMENT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
SURPRISE, HAWKEYE! I SENT STARK PACKING! I WOULDN'T MISS THIS LITTLE REUNION FOR ANYTHING!
I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, FELLA! THAT ONE WASN'T EVEN CLOSE!
IT WASN'T MEANT TO BE! IT CONTAINS A BOOMERANG ACTIVATOR! JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!
HE'S RIGHT! IT'S CIRCLING AROUND ME...FASTER AND FASTER!!
EEEEEEE
EEEE
IT'S GIVING OFF AN EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEK!...LOUDER AND LOUDER...CAN'T BEAR IT!!
IT WORKED! YOUR DEAFENER ARROW-HEAD IS AFFECTING HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM!
NOW I'LL FINISH HIM OFF WITH A POWER-BLAST ARROW!
BUT, THOUGH RACKED WITH NERVE-SHATTERING AGONY, THE GREAT GOLDEN-AVENGER'S MIGHTY ARM LASHES OUT, AND...
GOT IT! NOW, WHILE HE'S ON THE TRACK... I'LL SEND AN ELECTRIC BOLT THROUGH THE RAIL!
HAWKEYE!
ZZZZT!

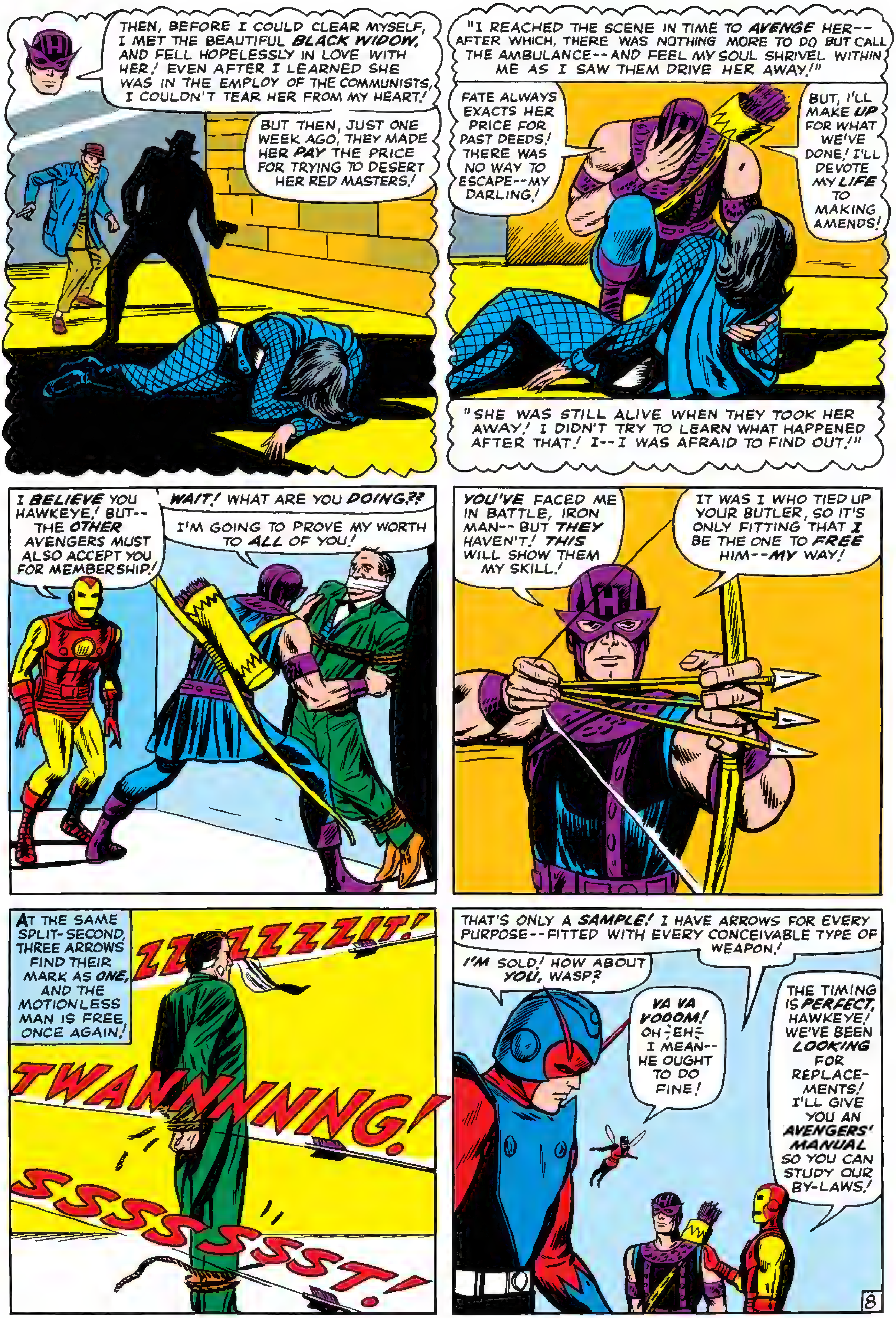

I..I'M ALL RIGHT, NATASHA! JUST... TAKEN BY SURPRISE... STUNNED!!
GET UP...QUICKLY!! HE'S STILL DAZED HIMSELF, BECAUSE OF THE NERVOUS SHOCK HE RECEIVED!! ONE MORE ARROW WILL FINISH HIM!!
CAN'T!! EVERYTHING SPINNING AROUND!! NEED A FEW SECONDS ...TO SNAP OUT OF IT!
I CAN'T AFFORD TO WAIT! ONCE IRON MAN REGAINS HIS FULL STRENGTH, IT WILL BE TOO LATE!
WE'VE ALREADY LOST THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE!
THIS WILL DO IT... BEFORE HE CAN LEAP TO SAFETY!
THERE! IT'S ROLLING AT FULL SPEED!! NOW TO SWING OFF AND LET THE IRON CAR DESTROY IRON MAN!
BUT, HEARING THE THUNDEROUS RUMBLE, IRON MAN LOOKS UP, AND THEN...
IF THAT FLATCAR HITS ME HEAD-ON, MY TRANSISTORS WILL BE SHATTERED!
AND THEN, THE GOLDEN CRUSADER NOTICES...
HAPPY AND PEPPER! DIRECTLY BEHIND ME! IF IT MISSES ME, IT'LL CRASH INTO THEM!
ONLY ONE THING TO DO... BUT, CAN I DO IT IN TIME ??!
WHOOSH!
SCRUNCH!
YOU'RE SAFE NOW! I'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN SECONDS!
NO TIME FOR THAT! LOOK BEHIND YA... HAWKEYE'S LOOSING ANOTHER ARROW!
TOO LATE! HERE IT COMES!


THANK HEAVENS!! IT ONLY HIT YOUR SHOULDER!
BUT...IT'S DISSOLVING MY ARMOR!
OH, NO!! WITHOUT YOUR ARMOR HOW CAN YOU BATTLE HAWKEYE??
THAT'S THE IDEA!! MY ACID-SPRAY ARROWS WILL HAVE HIM POWERLESS IN MINUTES!
ACID'S EATING MY ARMOR AWAY! AND NOW, THE BLACK WIDOW'S SHOOTING AT ME, TOO!
CRACK!
TWANNNGG!
CRASH!
TONY, OLD BOY, IF YOU EVER EXPECT TO GET OUT OF THIS ONE ALIVE, YOU'D BETTER MOVE FASTER THAN YOU'VE EVER MOVED BEFORE!
FIRST THING TO DO, IS PUT A BRICK WALL BETWEEN ME AND ANY MORE OF HAWKEYE'S LITTLE ARROWS!
SO THAT'S WHERE THE BLACK WIDOW WAS FIRING AT ME FROM! SHE STILL DOESN'T SEEM TO KNOW WHERE I DISAPPEARED TO!
HAWKEYE! AFTER HIM! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE!
HOW CAN ANYBODY SO BEAUTIFUL BE SO DANGEROUSLY BELLIGERENT, LADY??
AND, WHILE YOU'RE THINKING UP AN ANSWER, I'LL JUST BORROW THAT POP GUN OF YOURS!
IRON MAN!!
HAWKEYE.. HURRY!! HE'S OVER HERE!!
DON'T WORRY, MY DARLING! I HAVE HIM RIGHT IN MY SIGHTS! HE'S DONE FOR!
HAWKEYE'S RIGHT!...UNLESS I CAN SLIP MY BURROWING DEVICE ON MY FIST IN THE NEXT SPLIT-SECOND!

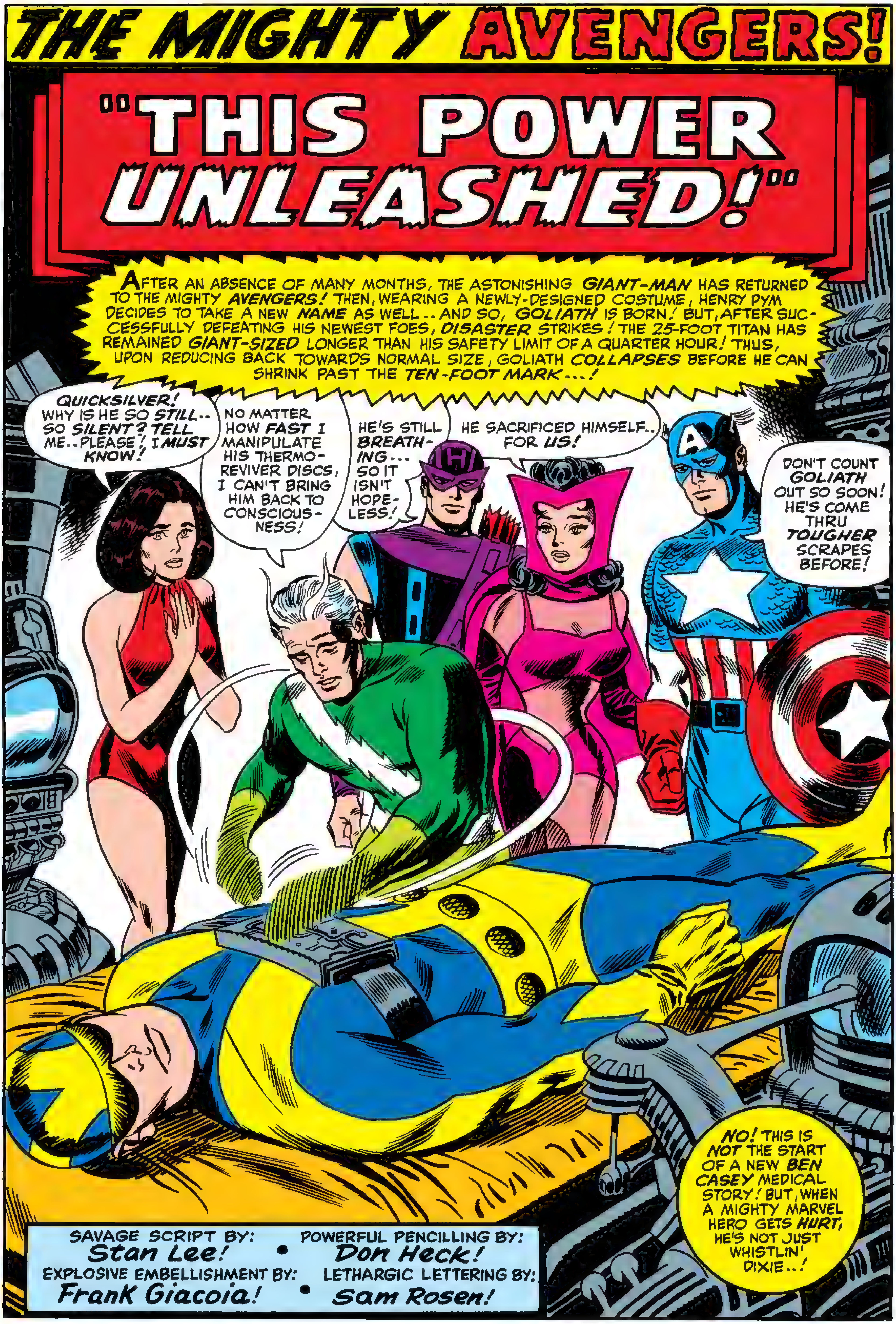

THERE! NOW FOR AN UNEXPECTED POWER DIVE!
MADE IT! HE WAS SO SURE HE HAD ME, THAT HE AIMED TOO SLOWLY!
NOW IT'S MY TURN, HAWKEYE!
ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN! I'VE PLENTY MORE ARROWS!
CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER...ACID IS MELTING ARMOR FASTER NOW!
I'LL USE THEIR TACTICS... STRIKE AT HIS WEAKEST LINK... THE BLACK WIDOW!
ONCE AGAIN, A TRANSISTOR-POWERED ELECTRICAL BOLT FINDS ITS MARK...STUNNING THE MASKED RED AGENT...!
OHHHH!
IT WORKED! HAWKEYE'S SHOTS ARE GOING WILD! HE'S WORRIED ABOUT THE GIRL!
YOU DARED ATTACK NATASHA!! YOU'LL PAY DEARLY FOR THAT ONE DAY...I SWEAR IT!!
THEN, TURNING FROM HIS IRON-GARBED FOE, THE FEARLESS ARCHER RACES TO THE WOMAN HE LOVES...!
NATASHA... MY DARLING! SPEAK TO ME!
NO! NO! GO BACK.. FINISH HIM OFF... GO BACK!!
NO! YOU'VE BEEN HURT! I CANNOT LEAVE YOU!!
YOU FOOL! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE...NOW IT'S TOO LATE! BECAUSE OF YOUR LOVE...I'VE FAILED AGAIN!!
MEANWHILE...
YOU CAN STILL CATCH 'EM! THEY DROVE OFF THAT WAY!
NO! I HAVE TO REMOVE MY ARMOR! THERE'LL BE OTHER TIMES!
WHY IS HE SO AFRAID WE'LL LEARN WHO HE IS IF HIS ARMOR MELTS OFF?
THEN, A FEW MINUTES LATER...
IRON MAN SENT ME TO CALL THE POLICE! THEY'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE! BUT...WHAT HAPPENED?
IT'S YOU!! OH, THANK HEAVENS! I WAS AFRAID THEY HAD TAKEN YOU WITH THEM!
SHE STILL LOVES HIM! SHE'LL ALWAYS LOVE HIM! WHAT CHANCE CAN A NOBODY LIKE ME EVER HAVE AGAINST TONY STARK?
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU!
PEPPER ..PEPPER! ...CAN'T YOU SEE YOU'RE BREAKING HAPPY'S HEART??
AND NOW, BEFORE YOU START THINKING THAT YOU'VE BEEN READING A ROMANCE MAG BY MISTAKE, TURN TO THE CAPTAIN AMERICA THRILLER WHICH FOLLOWS! WE GUARANTEE, THERE'S NOT A KISS IN A CARLOAD!
The End
12.

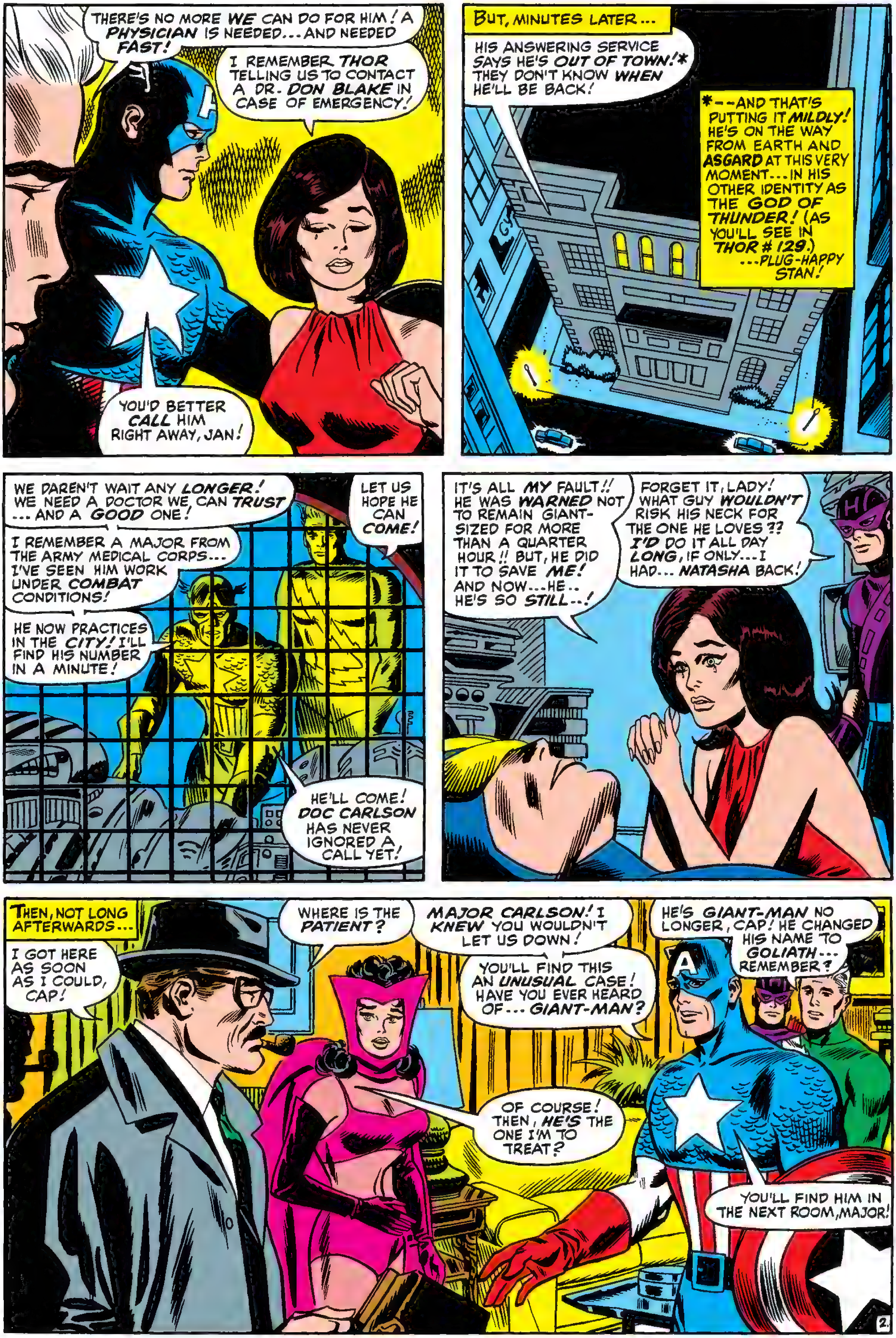
AVENGERS #16 (MAY 1965)

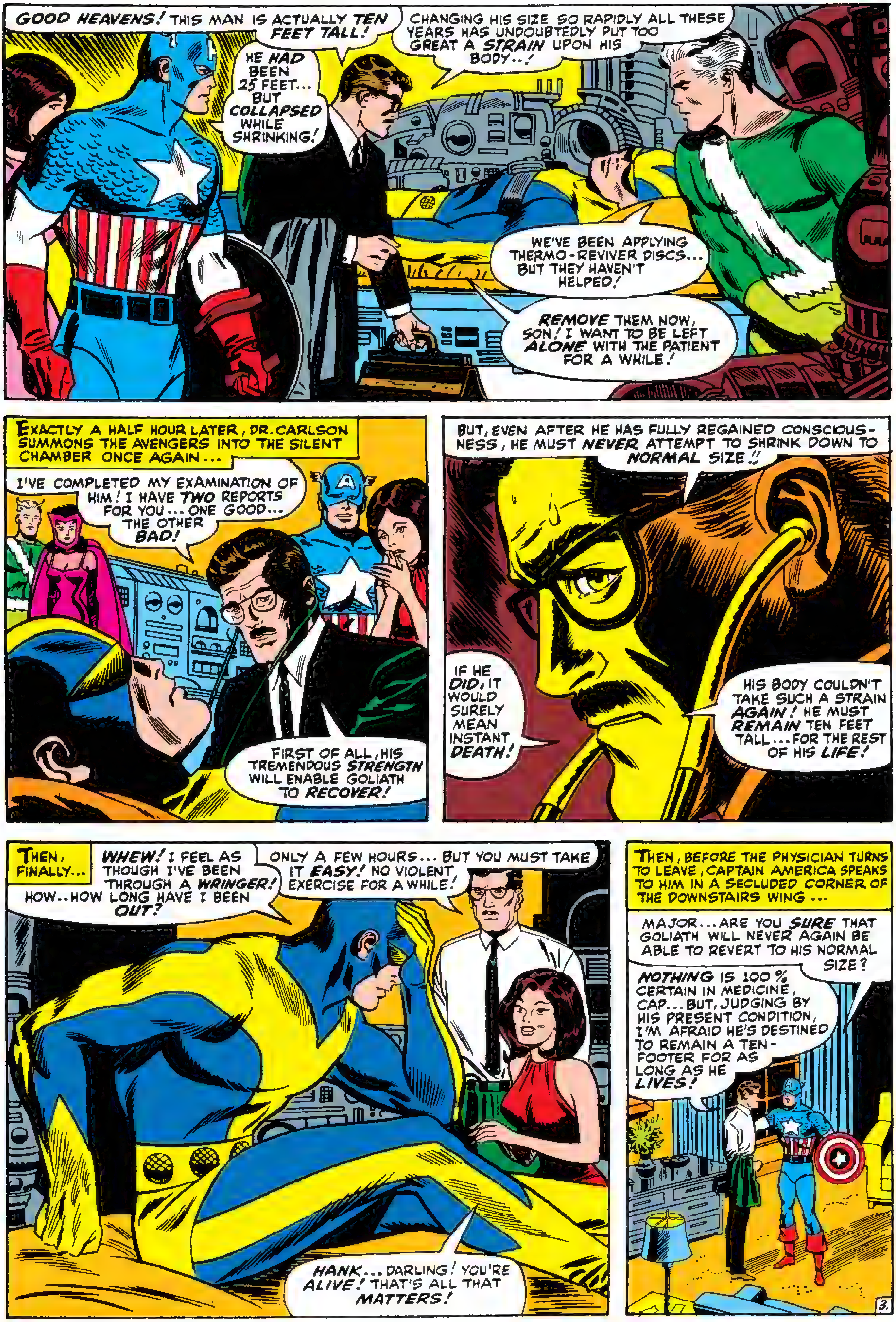

BUT SUDDENLY...
LOOK! SMOKE-- FILTERING INTO THE ROOM FROM UNDER THE DOOR! IT COULD BE AN ATTACK!
LET ME INVESTIGATE! I'M THE LEAST VULNERABLE IN MY ARMOR!
OH NO! WHY DID IT HAVE TO HAPPEN NOW-- OF ALL TIMES?!!
IT'S COMING FROM BEHIND THE DOOR! SOMETHING IS STUCK ONTO THE BACK! IT'S AN ARROW!
QUICKLY THEN! WHOEVER FIRED IT MUST STILL BE NEAR! LET'S GET HIM!
THE SMOKE IS SO DENSE I CAN HARDLY SEE!
I HAVE A FEELING I KNOW WHO FIRED THAT ARROW! AND, IF IT'S WHO I THINK IT IS, WE'LL HAVE A FIGHT ON OUR HANDS!
I WAS RIGHT!! IT'S-- HAWKEYE!!
LOOK! TONY STARK'S BUTLER IS TIED UP-- THAT'S HOW HE MANAGED TO GET IN!
STOP--ALL OF YOU!
I COME AS A FRIEND, NOT AS AN ENEMY!!
YOU?? A FRIEND??
YES! I WISH TO JOIN THE AVENGERS!! I NEVER INTENDED TO BE AN OUTCAST, OR AN ENEMY OF SOCIETY!
"I ALWAYS WISHED TO USE MY SKILLS, MY POWERS TO AID THE PUBLIC, BUT A CAPRICIOUS ACCIDENT OF FATE MADE THE POLICE THINK I WAS A MENACE!*"
STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!
I WANTED TO HELP THEM-- BUT THEY MISUNDERSTOOD!
* SEE IRON MAN #57-- STAN.
7

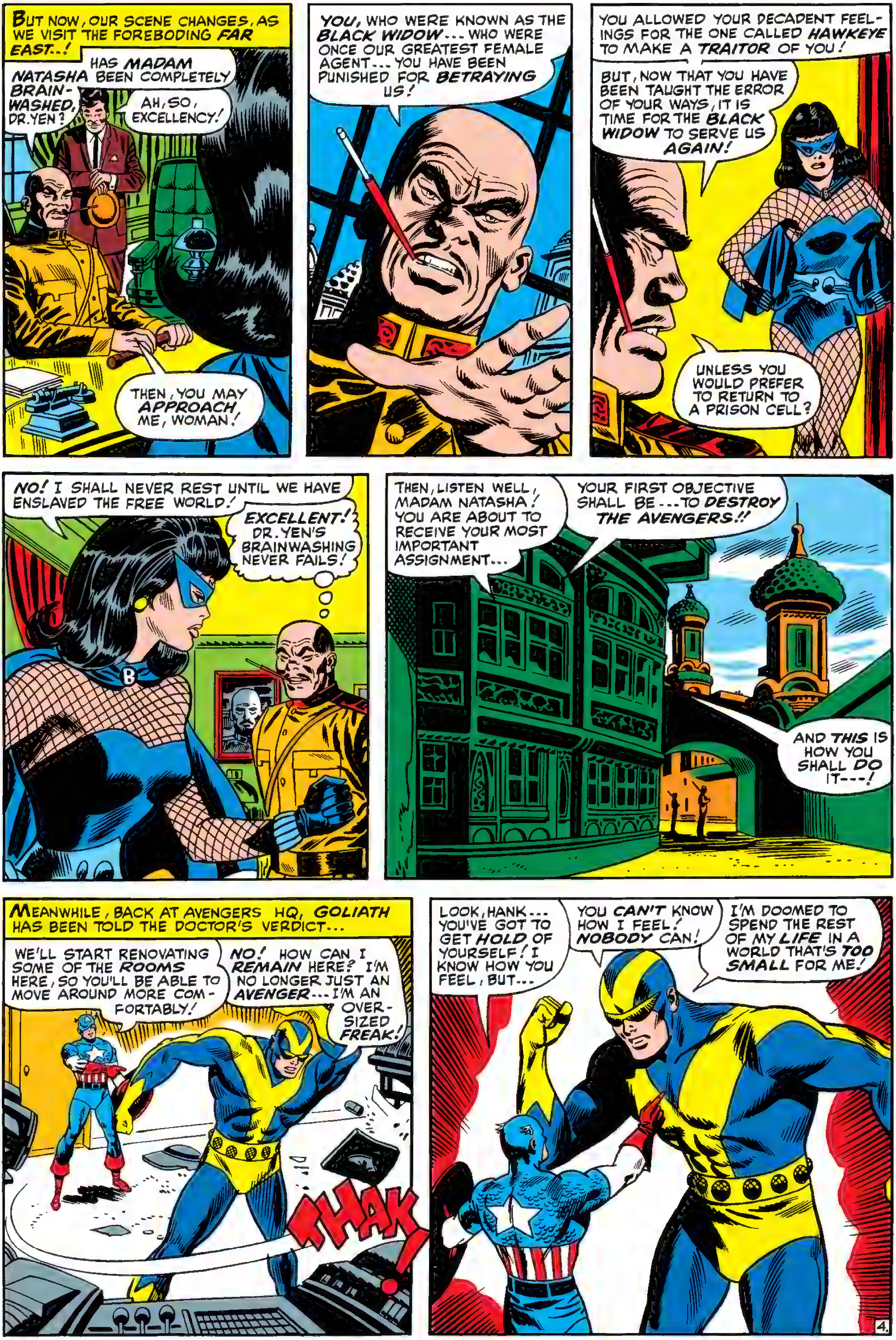

THEN, BEFORE I COULD CLEAR MYSELF, I MET THE BEAUTIFUL **BLACK WIDOW**, AND FELL HOPELESSLY IN LOVE WITH HER! EVEN AFTER I LEARNED SHE WAS IN THE EMPLOY OF THE COMMUNISTS, I COULDN'T TEAR HER FROM MY HEART!
BUT THEN, JUST ONE WEEK AGO, THEY MADE HER **PAY** THE PRICE FOR TRYING TO DESERT HER RED MASTERS!
"I REACHED THE SCENE IN TIME TO **AVENGE** HER-- AFTER WHICH, THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO DO BUT CALL THE AMBULANCE--AND FEEL MY SOUL SHRIVEL WITHIN ME AS I SAW THEM DRIVE HER AWAY!"
FATE ALWAYS EXACTS HER PRICE FOR PAST DEEDS! THERE WAS NO WAY TO ESCAPE--MY DARLING!
BUT, I'LL MAKE **UP** FOR WHAT WE'VE DONE! I'LL DEVOTE MY **LIFE** TO MAKING AMENDS!
"SHE WAS STILL ALIVE WHEN THEY TOOK HER AWAY! I DIDN'T TRY TO LEARN WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT! I--I WAS AFRAID TO FIND OUT!"
I **BELIEVE** YOU HAWKEYE! BUT-- THE **OTHER** AVENGERS MUST ALSO ACCEPT YOU FOR MEMBERSHIP!
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU **DOING??**
I'M GOING TO PROVE MY WORTH TO **ALL** OF YOU!
YOU'VE FACED ME IN BATTLE, IRON MAN-- BUT **THEY** HAVEN'T! **THIS** WILL SHOW THEM MY SKILL!
IT WAS I WHO TIED UP YOUR BUTLER, SO IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT **I** BE THE ONE TO **FREE** HIM--**MY** WAY!
AT THE SAME SPLIT-SECOND, THREE ARROWS FIND THEIR MARK AS **ONE**, AND THE MOTIONLESS MAN IS FREE ONCE AGAIN!
ZZZZZZZIT!
TWANNNNNG!
SSSSSSST!
THAT'S ONLY A **SAMPLE!** I HAVE ARROWS FOR EVERY PURPOSE--FITTED WITH EVERY CONCEIVABLE TYPE OF WEAPON!
I'M SOLD! HOW ABOUT **YOU**, WASP?
VA VA VOOOM! OH--EH-- I MEAN-- HE OUGHT TO DO FINE!
THE TIMING IS **PERFECT**, HAWKEYE! WE'VE BEEN **LOOKING** FOR REPLACEMENTS! I'LL GIVE YOU AN **AVENGERS' MANUAL** SO YOU CAN STUDY OUR BY-LAWS!

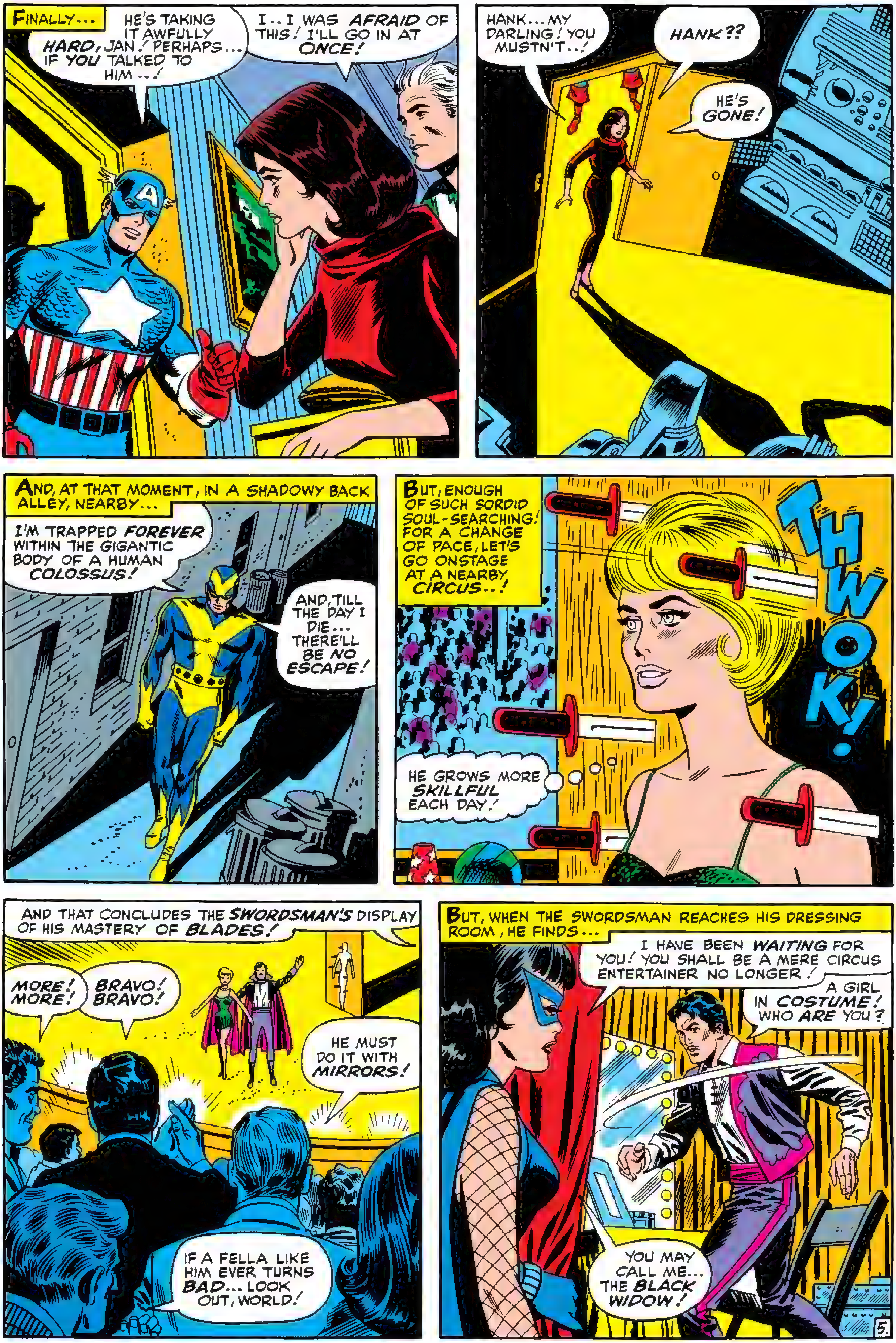
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
12¢
29
JUNE
"THIS POWER UNLEASHED!"
MARVEL COMICS GROUP

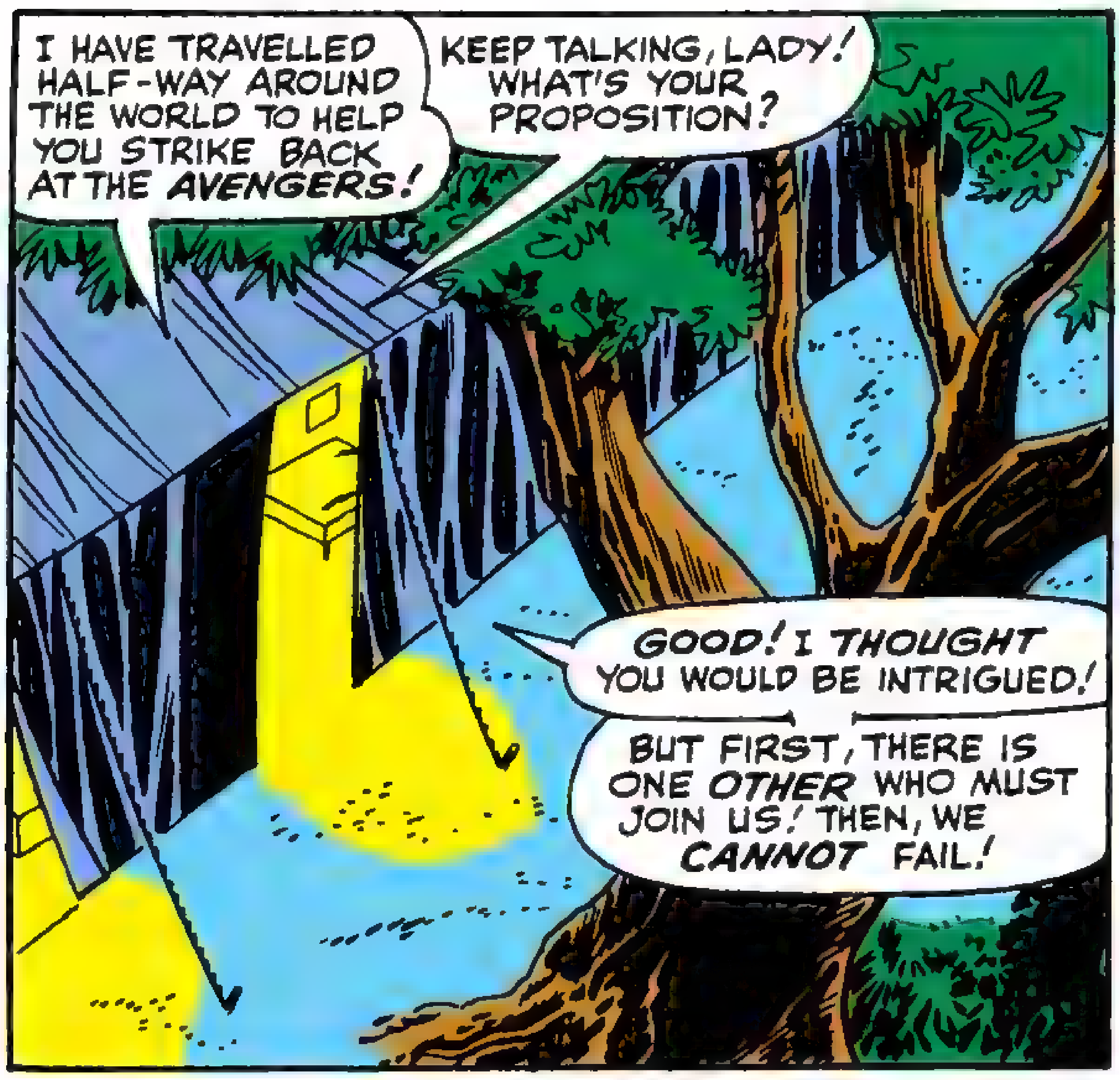

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"THIS POWER UNLEASHED!"
AFTER AN ABSENCE OF MANY MONTHS, THE ASTONISHING GIANT-MAN HAS RETURNED TO THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! THEN, WEARING A NEWLY-DESIGNED COSTUME, HENRY PYM DECIDES TO TAKE A NEW NAME AS WELL.. AND SO, GOLIATH IS BORN! BUT, AFTER SUCCESSFULLY DEFEATING HIS NEWEST FOES, DISASTER STRIKES! THE 25-FOOT TITAN HAS REMAINED GIANT-SIZED LONGER THAN HIS SAFETY LIMIT OF A QUARTER HOUR! THUS, UPON REDUCING BACK TOWARDS NORMAL SIZE, GOLIATH COLLAPSES BEFORE HE CAN SHRINK PAST THE TEN-FOOT MARK...!
QUICKSILVER! WHY IS HE SO STILL.. SO SILENT? TELL ME..PLEASE! I MUST KNOW!
NO MATTER HOW FAST I MANIPULATE HIS THERMO-REVIVER DISCS, I CAN'T BRING HIM BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS!
HE'S STILL BREATHING... SO IT ISN'T HOPELESS!
HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF.. FOR US!
DON'T COUNT GOLIATH OUT SO SOON! HE'S COME THRU TOUGHER SCRAPES BEFORE!
NO! THIS IS NOT THE START OF A NEW BEN CASEY MEDICAL STORY! BUT, WHEN A MIGHTY MARVEL HERO GETS HURT, HE'S NOT JUST WHISTLIN' DIXIE...!
SAVAGE SCRIPT BY: Stan Lee! • POWERFUL PENCILLING BY: Don Heck!
EXPLOSIVE EMBELLISHMENT BY: Frank Giacoia! • LETHARGIC LETTERING BY: Sam Rosen!

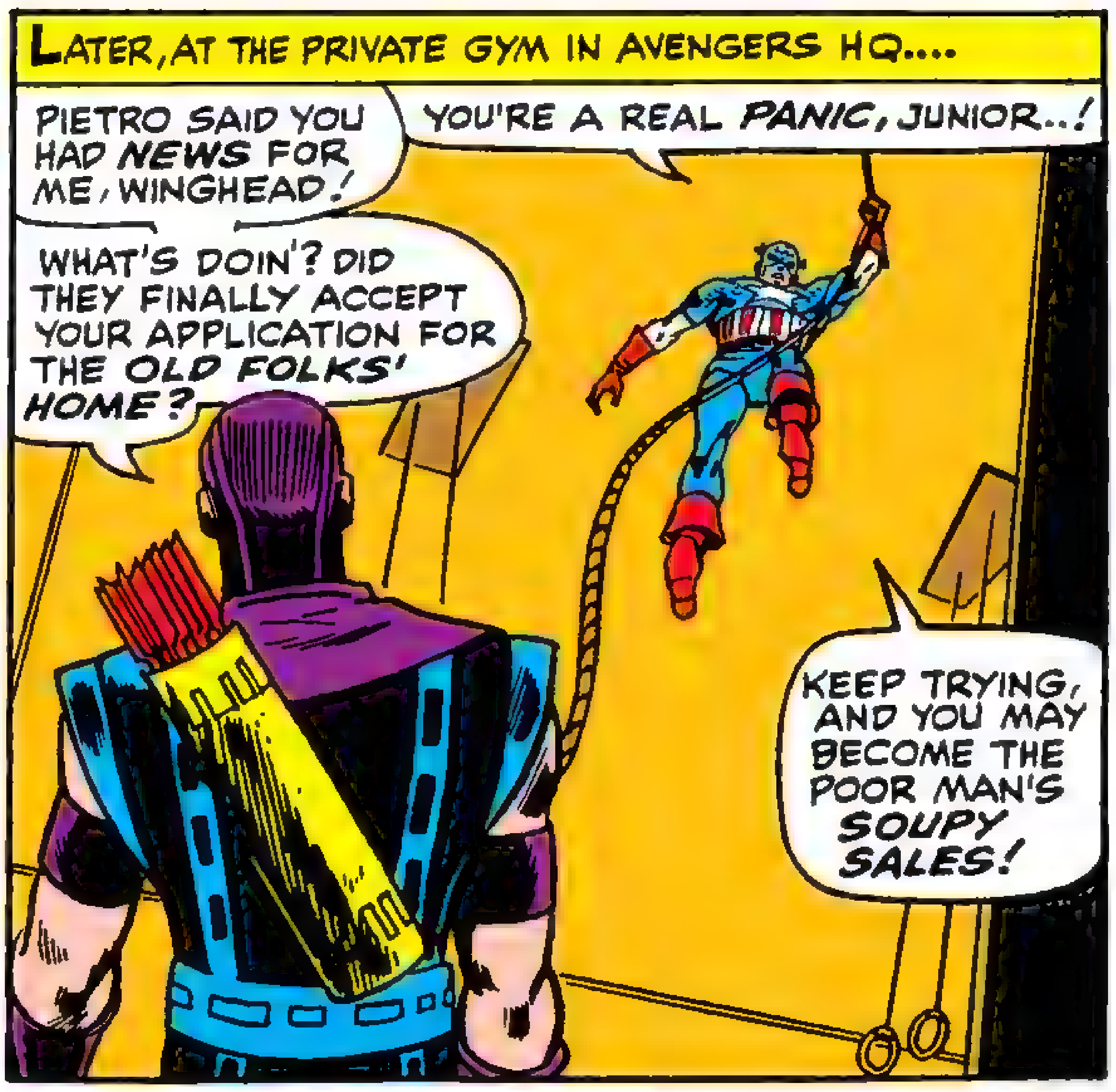

THERE'S NO MORE **WE** CAN DO FOR HIM! A **PHYSICIAN** IS NEEDED... AND NEEDED **FAST!**
I REMEMBER **THOR** TELLING US TO CONTACT A DR. **DON BLAKE** IN CASE OF EMERGENCY!
YOU'D BETTER **CALL** HIM RIGHT AWAY, JAN!
BUT, MINUTES LATER...
HIS ANSWERING SERVICE SAYS HE'S **OUT OF TOWN!*** THEY DON'T KNOW **WHEN** HE'LL BE BACK!
*--AND THAT'S PUTTING IT **MILDLY!** HE'S ON THE WAY FROM EARTH AND **ASGARD** AT THIS VERY MOMENT... IN HIS OTHER IDENTITY AS THE **GOD OF THUNDER!** (AS YOU'LL SEE IN **THOR # 129.**) ---PLUG-HAPPY STAN!
WE DAREN'T WAIT ANY **LONGER!** WE NEED A DOCTOR WE CAN **TRUST** ... AND A **GOOD** ONE!
I REMEMBER A MAJOR FROM THE ARMY MEDICAL CORPS... I'VE SEEN HIM WORK UNDER **COMBAT** CONDITIONS!
HE NOW PRACTICES IN THE **CITY!** I'LL FIND HIS NUMBER IN A MINUTE!
LET US HOPE HE CAN **COME!**
HE'LL COME! **DOC CARLSON** HAS NEVER IGNORED A CALL YET!
IT'S ALL **MY** FAULT!! HE WAS **WARNED** NOT TO REMAIN GIANT-SIZED FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER HOUR!! BUT, HE DID IT TO SAVE **ME!** AND NOW... HE.. HE'S SO **STILL**--!
FORGET IT, LADY! WHAT GUY **WOULDN'T** RISK HIS NECK FOR THE ONE HE LOVES?? **I'D** DO IT ALL DAY **LONG,** IF ONLY... I HAD... **NATASHA** BACK!
THEN, NOT LONG AFTERWARDS...
I GOT HERE AS SOON AS I COULD, CAP!
WHERE IS THE **PATIENT?**
MAJOR CARLSON! I **KNEW** YOU WOULDN'T LET US DOWN!
YOU'LL FIND THIS AN **UNUSUAL** CASE! HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF... **GIANT-MAN?**
HE'S **GIANT-MAN** NO LONGER, CAP! HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO **GOLIATH**... REMEMBER?
OF COURSE! THEN, **HE'S** THE ONE I'M TO TREAT?
YOU'LL FIND HIM IN THE NEXT ROOM, MAJOR!

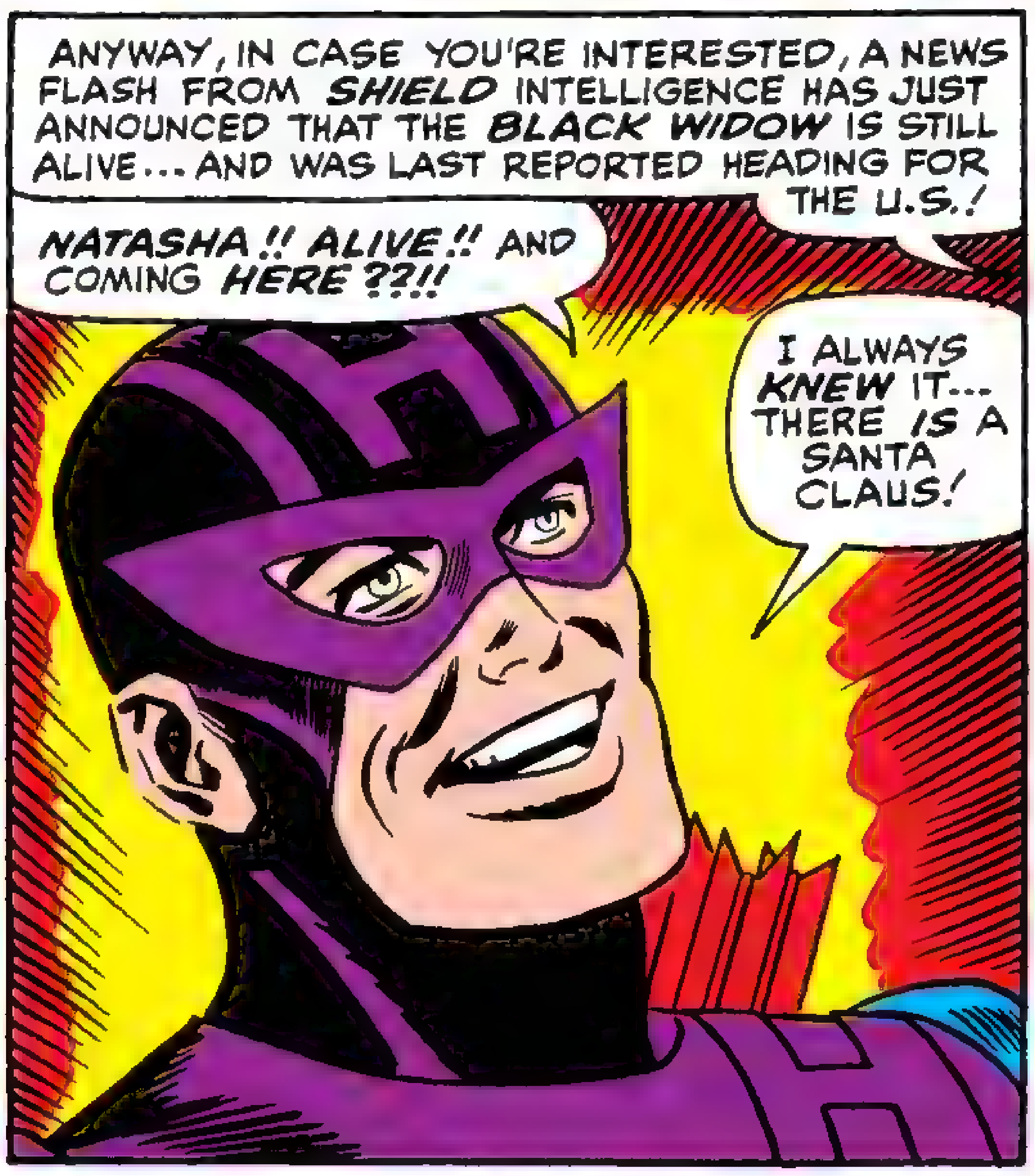

GOOD HEAVENS! THIS MAN IS ACTUALLY TEN FEET TALL!
HE HAD BEEN 25 FEET... BUT COLLAPSED WHILE SHRINKING!
CHANGING HIS SIZE SO RAPIDLY ALL THESE YEARS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY PUT TOO GREAT A STRAIN UPON HIS BODY..!
WE'VE BEEN APPLYING THERMO-REVIVER DISCS... BUT THEY HAVEN'T HELPED!
REMOVE THEM NOW, SON! I WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE WITH THE PATIENT FOR A WHILE!
EXACTLY A HALF HOUR LATER, DR. CARLSON SUMMONS THE AVENGERS INTO THE SILENT CHAMBER ONCE AGAIN...
I'VE COMPLETED MY EXAMINATION OF HIM! I HAVE TWO REPORTS FOR YOU... ONE GOOD... THE OTHER BAD!
FIRST OF ALL, HIS TREMENDOUS STRENGTH WILL ENABLE GOLIATH TO RECOVER!
BUT, EVEN AFTER HE HAS FULLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, HE MUST NEVER ATTEMPT TO SHRINK DOWN TO NORMAL SIZE!!
IF HE DID, IT WOULD SURELY MEAN INSTANT DEATH!
HIS BODY COULDN'T TAKE SUCH A STRAIN AGAIN! HE MUST REMAIN TEN FEET TALL... FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE!
THEN, FINALLY...
WHEW! I FEEL AS THOUGH I'VE BEEN THROUGH A WRINGER! HOW..HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN OUT?
ONLY A FEW HOURS... BUT YOU MUST TAKE IT EASY! NO VIOLENT EXERCISE FOR A WHILE!
HANK... DARLING! YOU'RE ALIVE! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!
THEN, BEFORE THE PHYSICIAN TURNS TO LEAVE, CAPTAIN AMERICA SPEAKS TO HIM IN A SECLUDED CORNER OF THE DOWNSTAIRS WING...
MAJOR... ARE YOU SURE THAT GOLIATH WILL NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO REVERT TO HIS NORMAL SIZE?
NOTHING IS 100% CERTAIN IN MEDICINE, CAP... BUT, JUDGING BY HIS PRESENT CONDITION, I'M AFRAID HE'S DESTINED TO REMAIN A TEN-FOOTER FOR AS LONG AS HE LIVES!

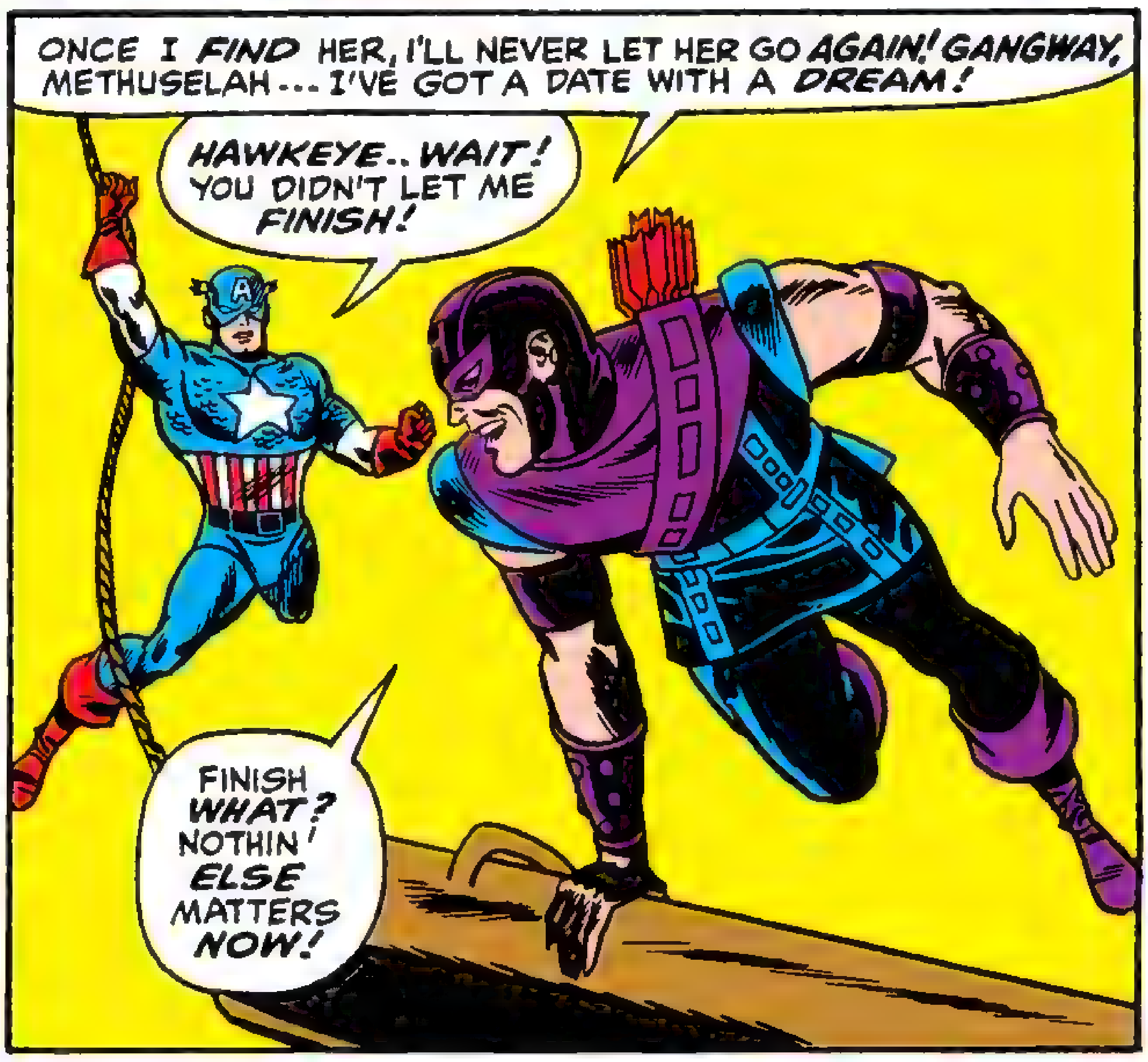

BUT NOW, OUR SCENE CHANGES, AS WE VISIT THE FOREBODING *FAR EAST*..!
HAS *MADAM NATASHA* BEEN COMPLETELY *BRAIN-WASHED*, DR. YEN?
AH, SO, EXCELLENCY!
THEN, YOU MAY *APPROACH* ME, WOMAN!
YOU, WHO WERE KNOWN AS THE *BLACK WIDOW*... WHO WERE ONCE OUR GREATEST FEMALE AGENT... YOU HAVE BEEN PUNISHED FOR *BETRAYING* US!
YOU ALLOWED YOUR DECADENT FEELINGS FOR THE ONE CALLED *HAWKEYE* TO MAKE A *TRAITOR* OF YOU!
BUT, NOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THE ERROR OF YOUR WAYS, IT IS TIME FOR THE *BLACK WIDOW* TO SERVE US *AGAIN!*
UNLESS YOU WOULD PREFER TO RETURN TO A PRISON CELL?
NO! I SHALL NEVER REST UNTIL WE HAVE ENSLAVED THE FREE WORLD!
EXCELLENT! DR. YEN'S BRAINWASHING NEVER FAILS!
THEN, LISTEN WELL, MADAM NATASHA! YOU ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT...
YOUR FIRST OBJECTIVE SHALL BE... TO *DESTROY THE AVENGERS!!*
AND *THIS* IS HOW YOU SHALL *DO* IT---!
MEANWHILE, BACK AT AVENGERS HQ, *GOLIATH* HAS BEEN TOLD THE DOCTOR'S VERDICT...
WE'LL START RENOVATING SOME OF THE *ROOMS* HERE, SO YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE AROUND MORE COMFORTABLY!
NO! HOW CAN I *REMAIN* HERE? I'M NO LONGER JUST AN *AVENGER*... I'M AN OVER-SIZED *FREAK!*
THAK!
LOOK, HANK... YOU'VE GOT TO GET *HOLD* OF YOURSELF! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT...
YOU *CAN'T* KNOW HOW I FEEL! *NOBODY* CAN!
I'M DOOMED TO SPEND THE REST OF MY *LIFE* IN A WORLD THAT'S *TOO SMALL* FOR ME!

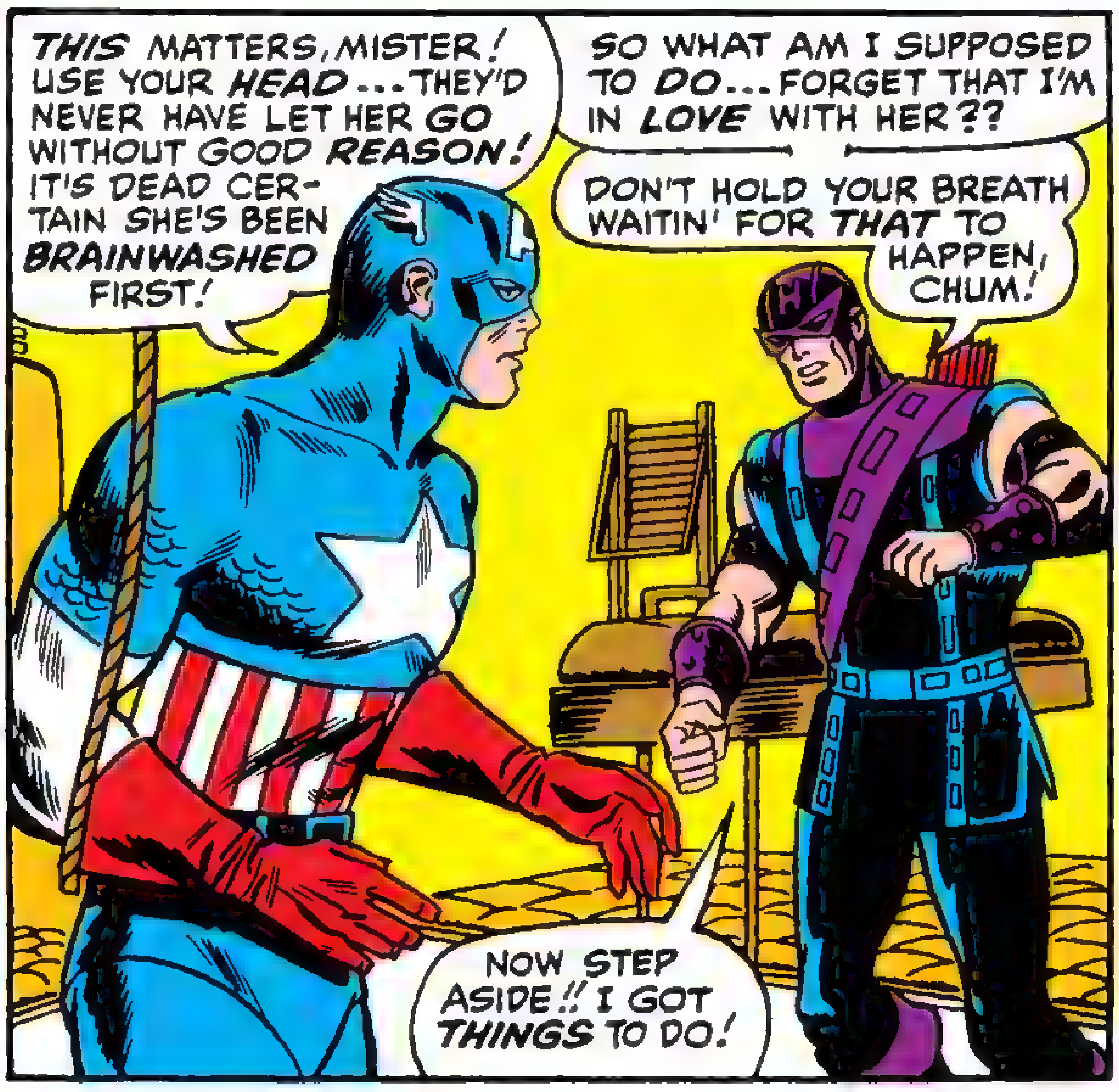

FINALLY...
HE'S TAKING IT AWFULLY HARD, JAN! PERHAPS... IF YOU TALKED TO HIM...!
I.. I WAS AFRAID OF THIS! I'LL GO IN AT ONCE!
HANK... MY DARLING! YOU MUSTN'T..!
HANK??
HE'S GONE!
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN A SHADOWY BACK ALLEY, NEARBY...
I'M TRAPPED FOREVER WITHIN THE GIGANTIC BODY OF A HUMAN COLOSSUS!
AND, TILL THE DAY I DIE... THERE'LL BE NO ESCAPE!
BUT, ENOUGH OF SUCH SORDID SOUL-SEARCHING! FOR A CHANGE OF PACE, LET'S GO ONSTAGE AT A NEARBY CIRCUS..!
THWOK!
HE GROWS MORE SKILLFUL EACH DAY!
AND THAT CONCLUDES THE SWORDSMAN'S DISPLAY OF HIS MASTERY OF BLADES!
MORE! MORE!
BRAVO! BRAVO!
HE MUST DO IT WITH MIRRORS!
IF A FELLA LIKE HIM EVER TURNS BAD... LOOK OUT, WORLD!
BUT, WHEN THE SWORDSMAN REACHES HIS DRESSING ROOM, HE FINDS...
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU! YOU SHALL BE A MERE CIRCUS ENTERTAINER NO LONGER!
A GIRL IN COSTUME! WHO ARE YOU?
YOU MAY CALL ME... THE BLACK WIDOW!

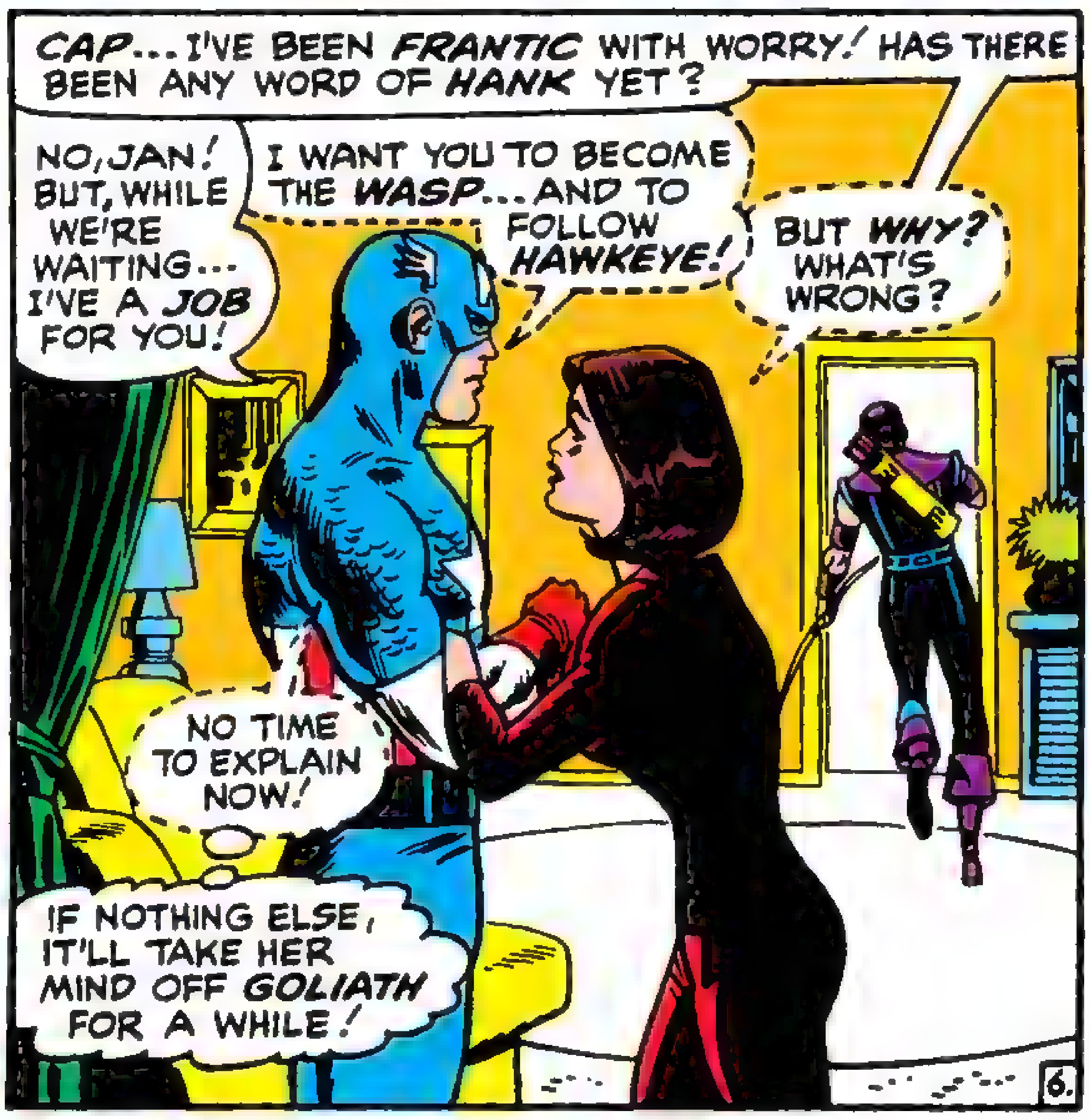

I HAVE TRAVELLED HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD TO HELP YOU STRIKE BACK AT THE *AVENGERS!*
KEEP TALKING, LADY! WHAT'S YOUR PROPOSITION?
GOOD! I *THOUGHT* YOU WOULD BE INTRIGUED!
BUT FIRST, THERE IS ONE *OTHER* WHO MUST JOIN US! THEN, WE *CANNOT* FAIL!

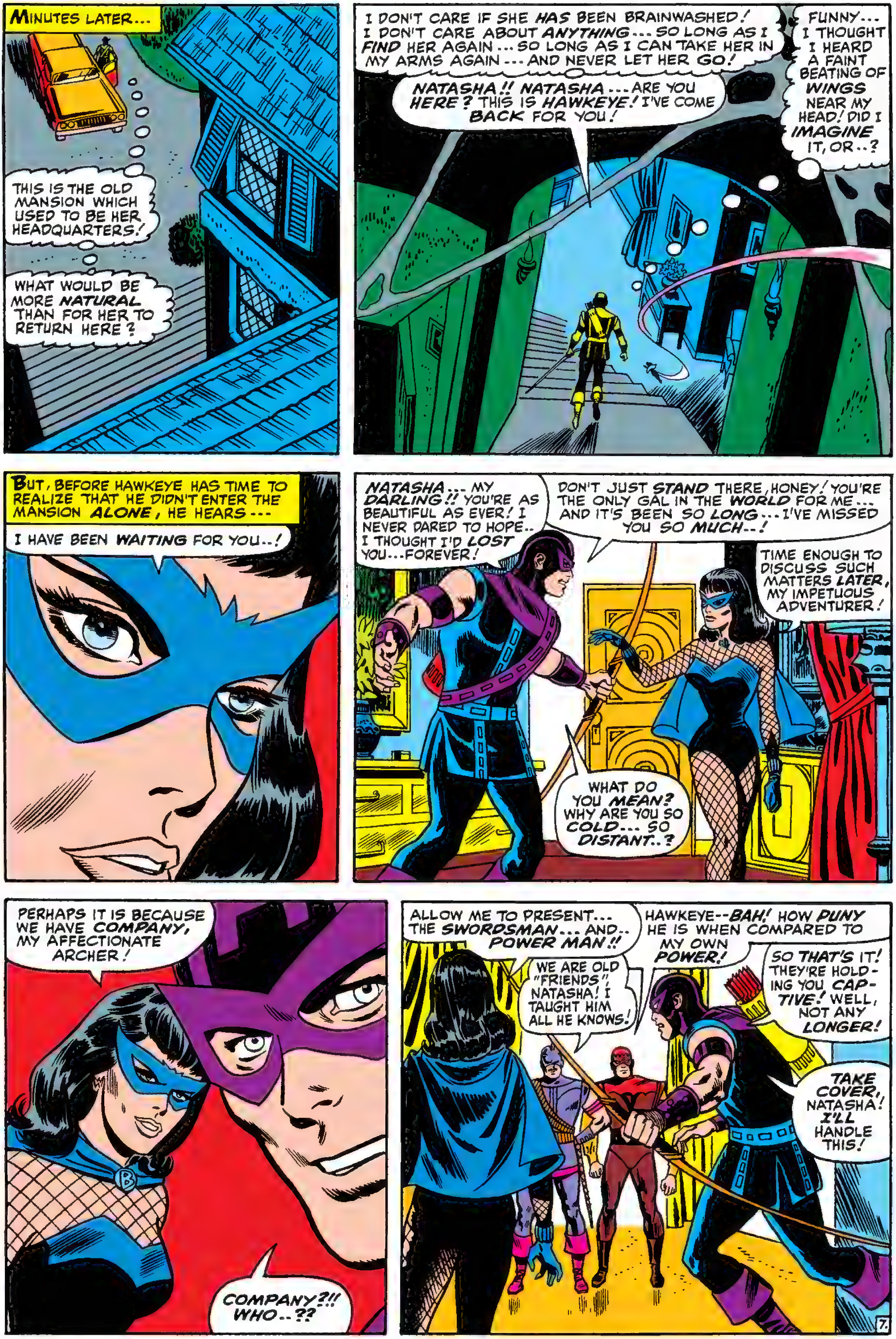

LATER, AT THE PRIVATE GYM IN AVENGERS HQ....
PIETRO SAID YOU HAD *NEWS* FOR ME, WINGHEAD!
YOU'RE A REAL *PANIC,* JUNIOR..!
WHAT'S DOIN'? DID THEY FINALLY ACCEPT YOUR APPLICATION FOR THE *OLD FOLKS' HOME?*
KEEP TRYING, AND YOU MAY BECOME THE POOR MAN'S *SOUPY SALES!*

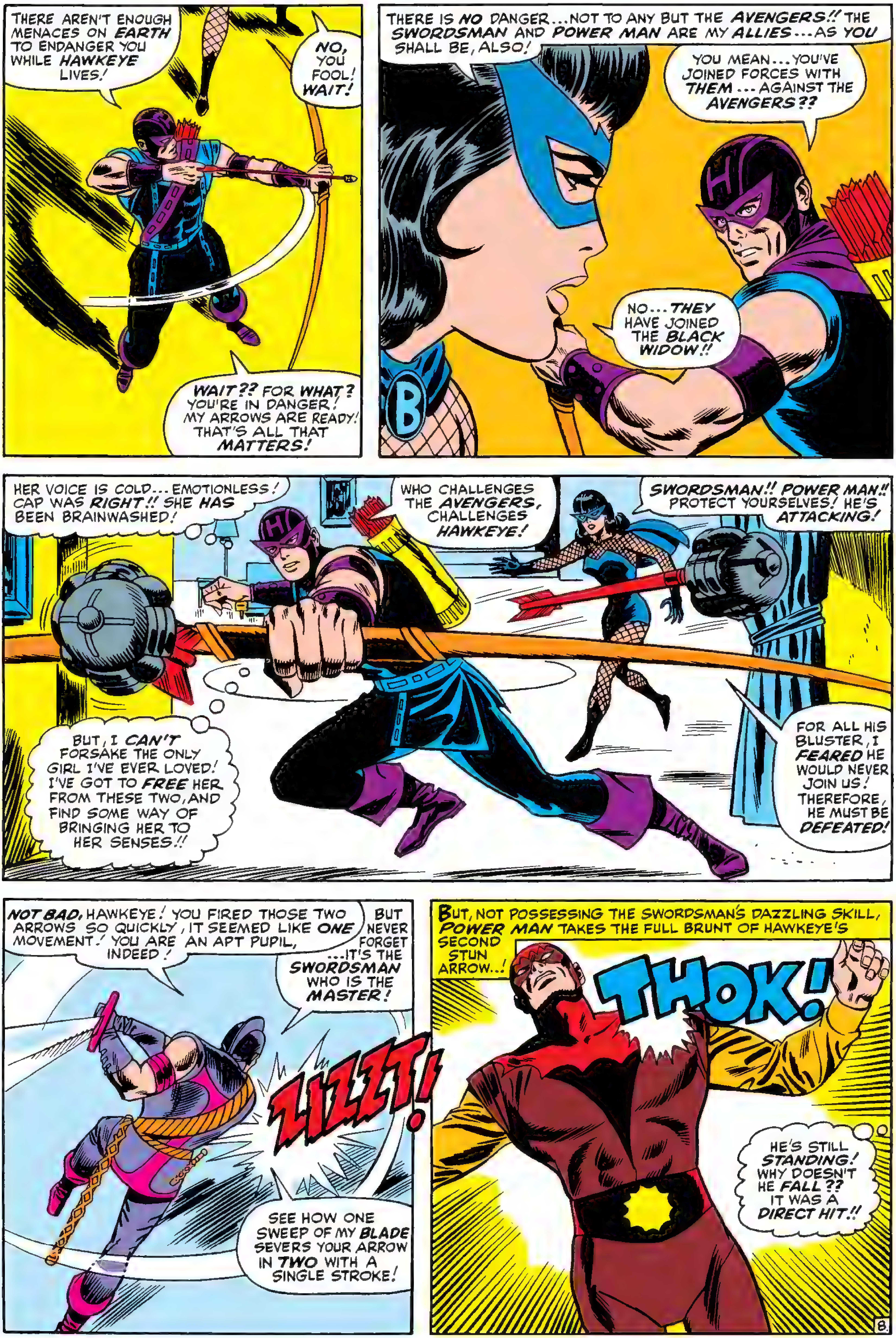

ANYWAY, IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED, A NEWS FLASH FROM *SHIELD* INTELLIGENCE HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THAT THE *BLACK WIDOW* IS STILL ALIVE... AND WAS LAST REPORTED HEADING FOR THE U.S.!
NATASHA!! ALIVE!! AND COMING *HERE ??!!*
I ALWAYS *KNEW* IT... THERE *IS* A SANTA CLAUS!

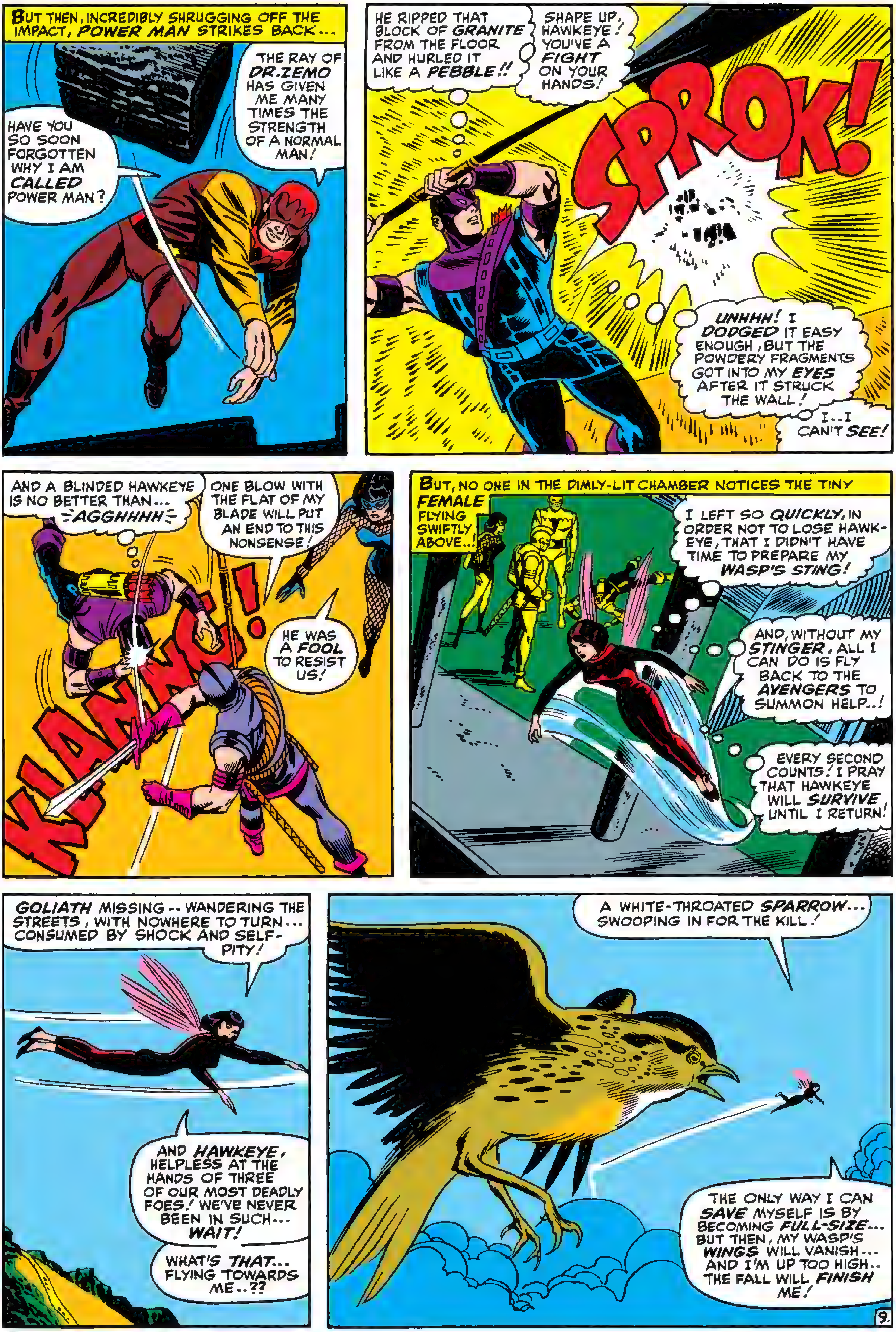

ONCE I *FIND* HER, I'LL NEVER LET HER GO *AGAIN! GANGWAY,* METHUSELAH... I'VE GOT A DATE WITH A *DREAM!*
HAWKEYE.. WAIT! YOU DIDN'T LET ME *FINISH!*
FINISH *WHAT?* NOTHIN' *ELSE* MATTERS *NOW!*

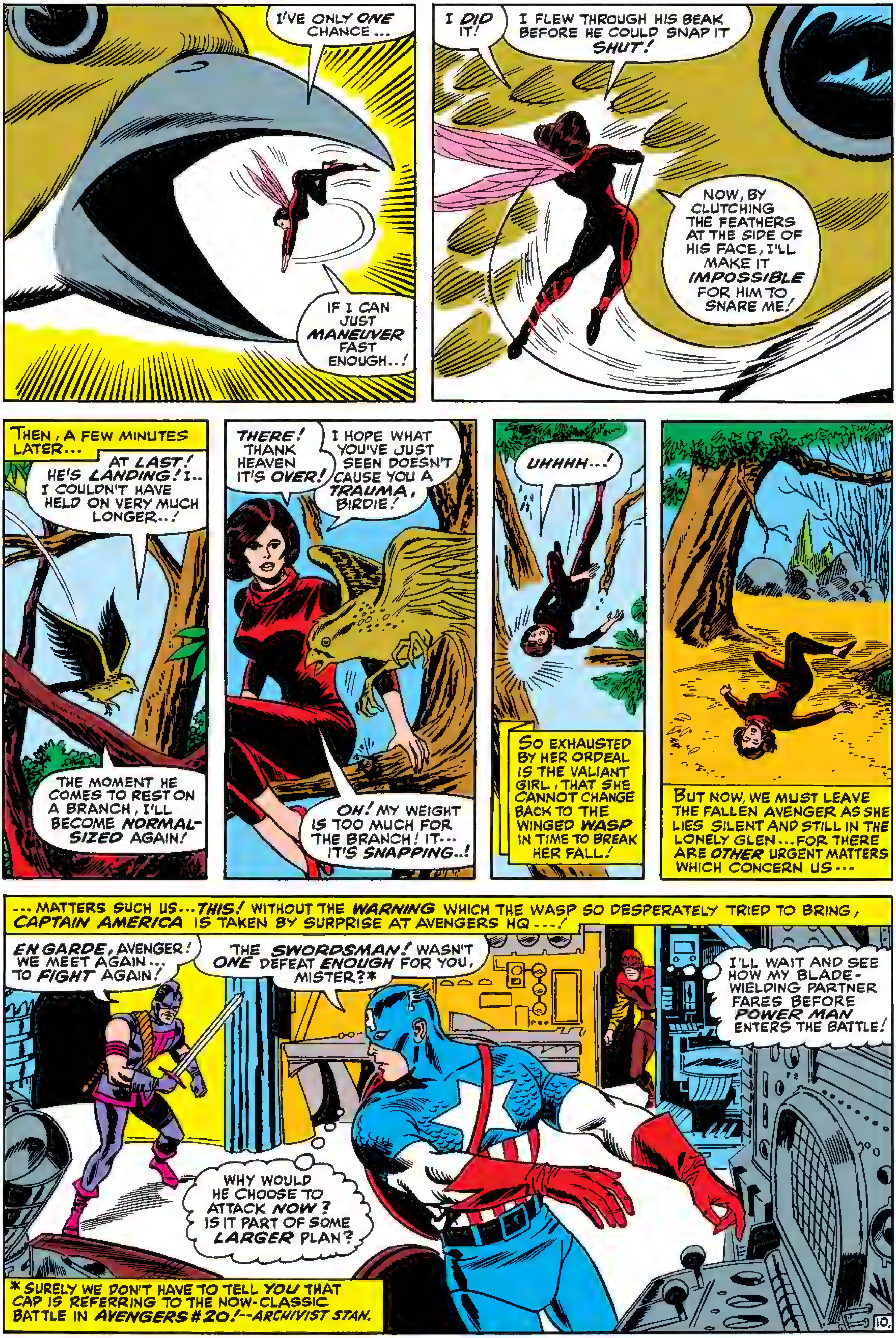

THIS MATTERS, MISTER! USE YOUR *HEAD*... THEY'D NEVER HAVE LET HER *GO* WITHOUT GOOD *REASON!* IT'S DEAD CERTAIN SHE'S BEEN *BRAINWASHED* FIRST!
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO *DO*... FORGET THAT I'M IN *LOVE* WITH HER??
DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH WAITIN' FOR *THAT* TO HAPPEN, CHUM!
NOW STEP ASIDE!! I GOT *THINGS* TO DO!

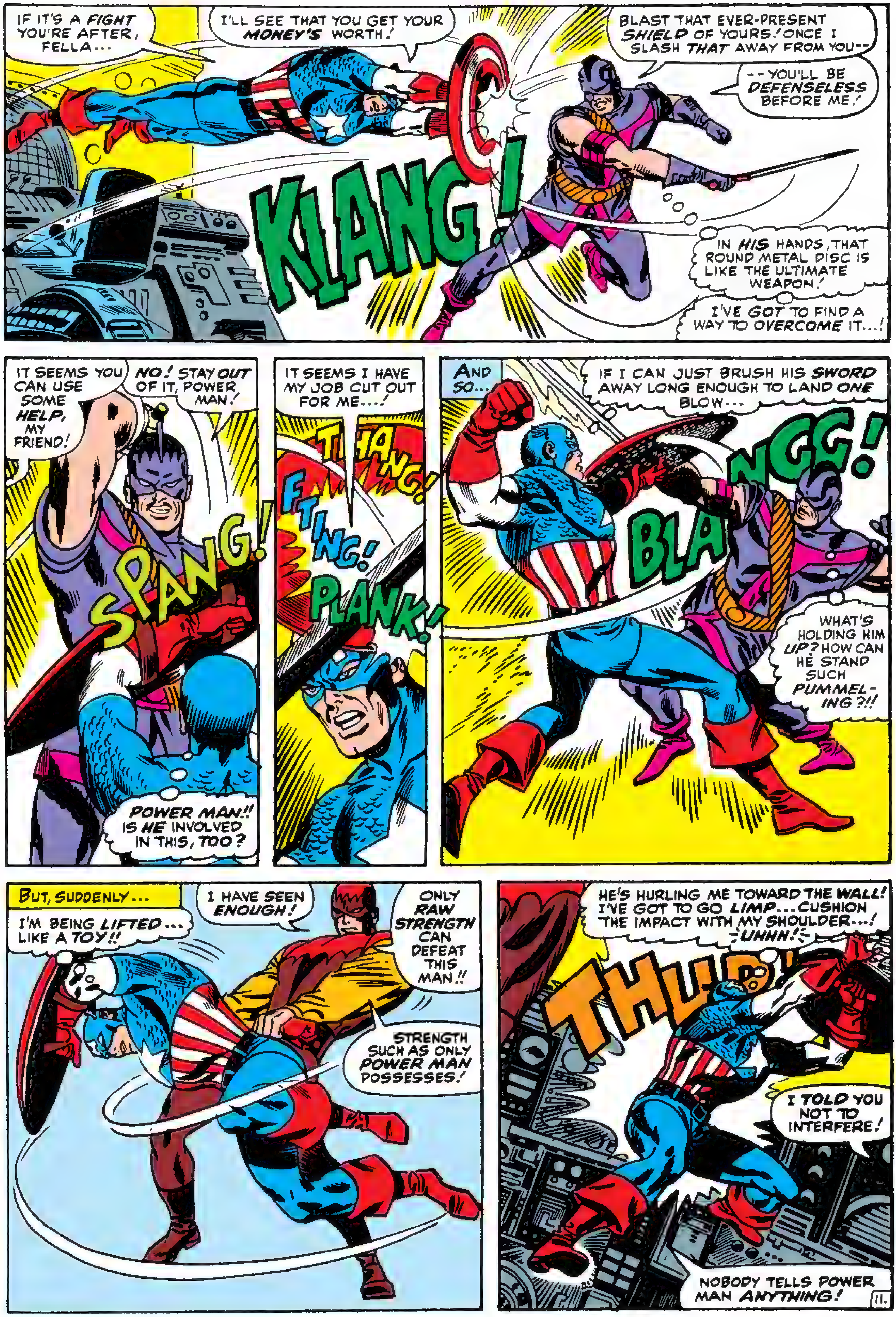

CAP... I'VE BEEN *FRANTIC* WITH WORRY! HAS THERE BEEN ANY WORD OF *HANK* YET?
NO, JAN! BUT, WHILE WE'RE WAITING... I'VE A *JOB* FOR YOU!
I WANT YOU TO BECOME THE *WASP*... AND TO FOLLOW *HAWKEYE!*
BUT *WHY?* WHAT'S WRONG?
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN NOW!
IF NOTHING ELSE, IT'LL TAKE HER MIND OFF *GOLIATH* FOR A WHILE!

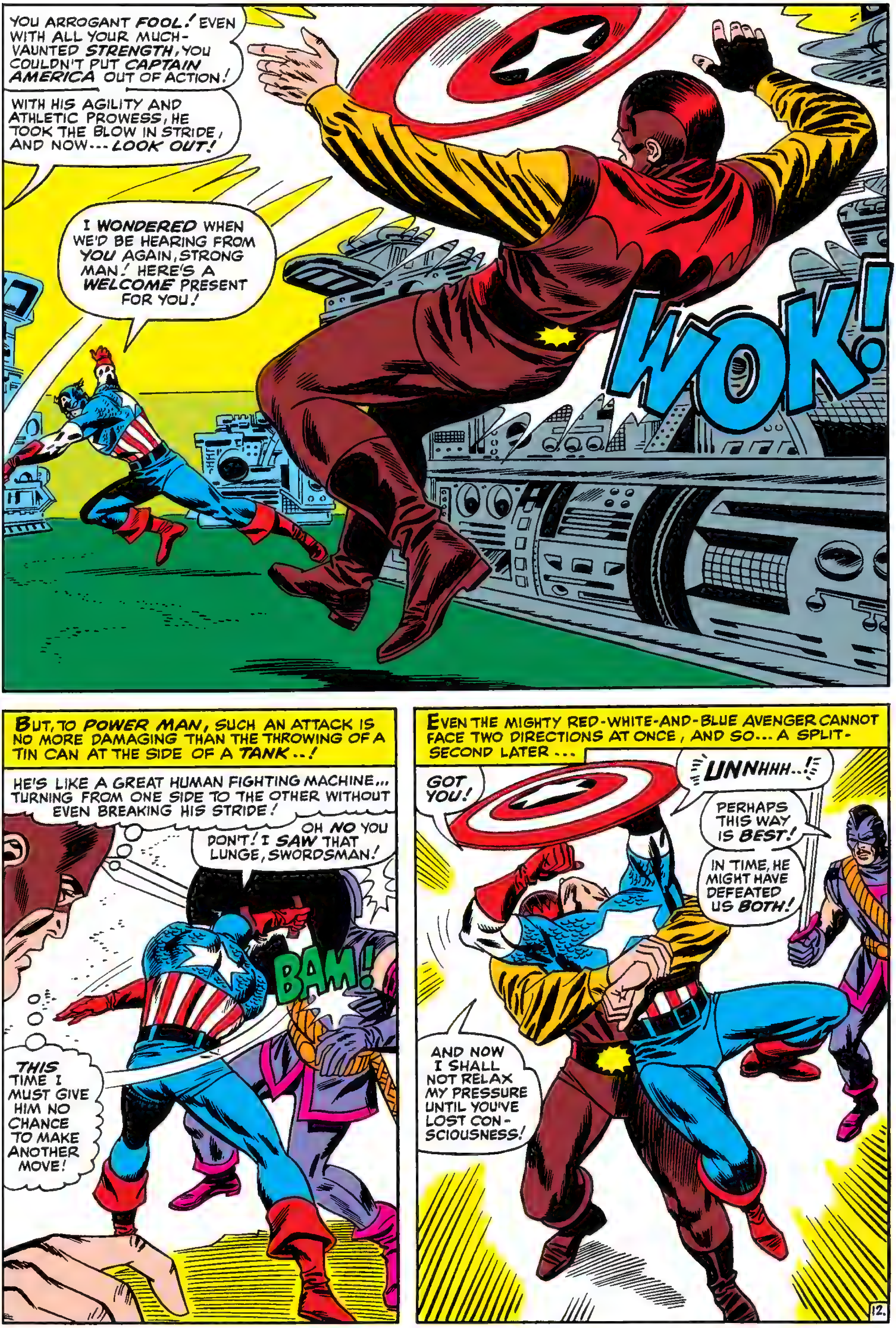

MINUTES LATER...
THIS IS THE OLD MANSION WHICH USED TO BE HER HEADQUARTERS!
WHAT WOULD BE MORE NATURAL THAN FOR HER TO RETURN HERE?
I DON'T CARE IF SHE HAS BEEN BRAINWASHED! I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING... SO LONG AS I FIND HER AGAIN... SO LONG AS I CAN TAKE HER IN MY ARMS AGAIN... AND NEVER LET HER GO!
NATASHA!! NATASHA... ARE YOU HERE? THIS IS HAWKEYE! I'VE COME BACK FOR YOU!
FUNNY... I THOUGHT I HEARD A FAINT BEATING OF WINGS NEAR MY HEAD! DID I IMAGINE IT, OR..?
BUT, BEFORE HAWKEYE HAS TIME TO REALIZE THAT HE DIDN'T ENTER THE MANSION ALONE, HE HEARS---
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU..!
NATASHA... MY DARLING!! YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER! I NEVER DARED TO HOPE.. I THOUGHT I'D LOST YOU... FOREVER!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, HONEY! YOU'RE THE ONLY GAL IN THE WORLD FOR ME... AND IT'S BEEN SO LONG... I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH--!
TIME ENOUGH TO DISCUSS SUCH MATTERS LATER, MY IMPETUOUS ADVENTURER!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHY ARE YOU SO COLD... SO DISTANT..?
PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE COMPANY, MY AFFECTIONATE ARCHER!
COMPANY?!! WHO..??
ALLOW ME TO PRESENT... THE SWORDSMAN... AND.. POWER MAN!!
WE ARE OLD "FRIENDS", NATASHA! I TAUGHT HIM ALL HE KNOWS!
HAWKEYE--BAH! HOW PUNY HE IS WHEN COMPARED TO MY OWN POWER!
SO THAT'S IT! THEY'RE HOLDING YOU CAPTIVE! WELL, NOT ANY LONGER!
TAKE COVER, NATASHA! I'LL HANDLE THIS!

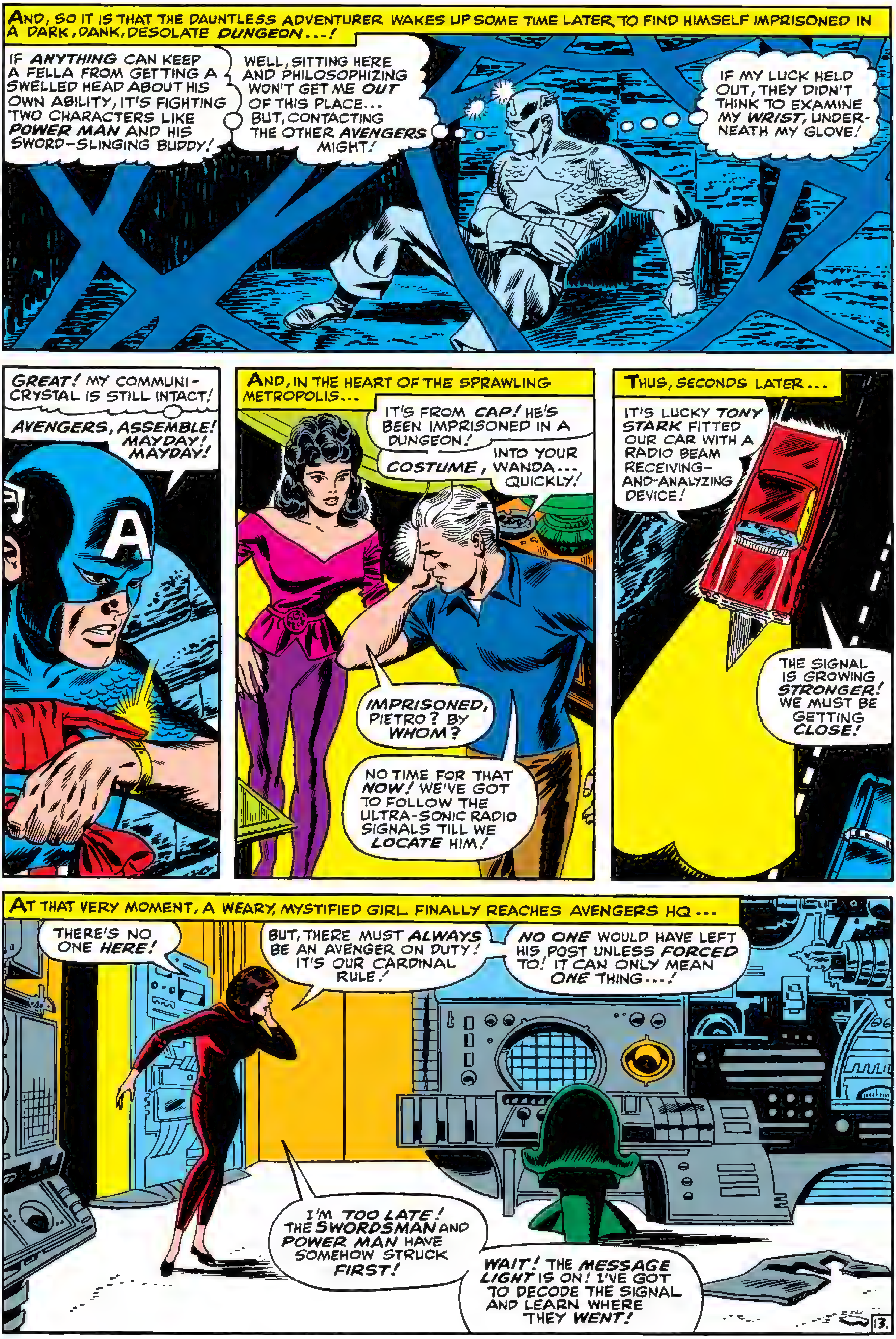

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH MENACES ON EARTH TO ENDANGER YOU WHILE HAWKEYE LIVES!
NO, YOU FOOL! WAIT!
WAIT?? FOR WHAT? YOU'RE IN DANGER! MY ARROWS ARE READY! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!
THERE IS NO DANGER... NOT TO ANY BUT THE AVENGERS!! THE SWORDSMAN AND POWER MAN ARE MY ALLIES... AS YOU SHALL BE, ALSO!
YOU MEAN... YOU'VE JOINED FORCES WITH THEM... AGAINST THE AVENGERS??
NO... THEY HAVE JOINED THE BLACK WIDOW!!
B
HER VOICE IS COLD... EMOTIONLESS! CAP WAS RIGHT!! SHE HAS BEEN BRAINWASHED!
WHO CHALLENGES THE AVENGERS, CHALLENGES HAWKEYE!
SWORDSMAN!! POWER MAN!! PROTECT YOURSELVES! HE'S ATTACKING!
BUT, I CAN'T FORSAKE THE ONLY GIRL I'VE EVER LOVED! I'VE GOT TO FREE HER FROM THESE TWO, AND FIND SOME WAY OF BRINGING HER TO HER SENSES!!
FOR ALL HIS BLUSTER, I FEARED HE WOULD NEVER JOIN US! THEREFORE, HE MUST BE DEFEATED!
NOT BAD, HAWKEYE! YOU FIRED THOSE TWO ARROWS SO QUICKLY, IT SEEMED LIKE ONE MOVEMENT! YOU ARE AN APT PUPIL, INDEED!
BUT NEVER FORGET ...IT'S THE SWORDSMAN WHO IS THE MASTER!
ZIZZT!
SEE HOW ONE SWEEP OF MY BLADE SEVERS YOUR ARROW IN TWO WITH A SINGLE STROKE!
BUT, NOT POSSESSING THE SWORDSMAN'S DAZZLING SKILL, POWER MAN TAKES THE FULL BRUNT OF HAWKEYE'S SECOND STUN ARROW...!
THOK!
HE'S STILL STANDING! WHY DOESN'T HE FALL?? IT WAS A DIRECT HIT!!

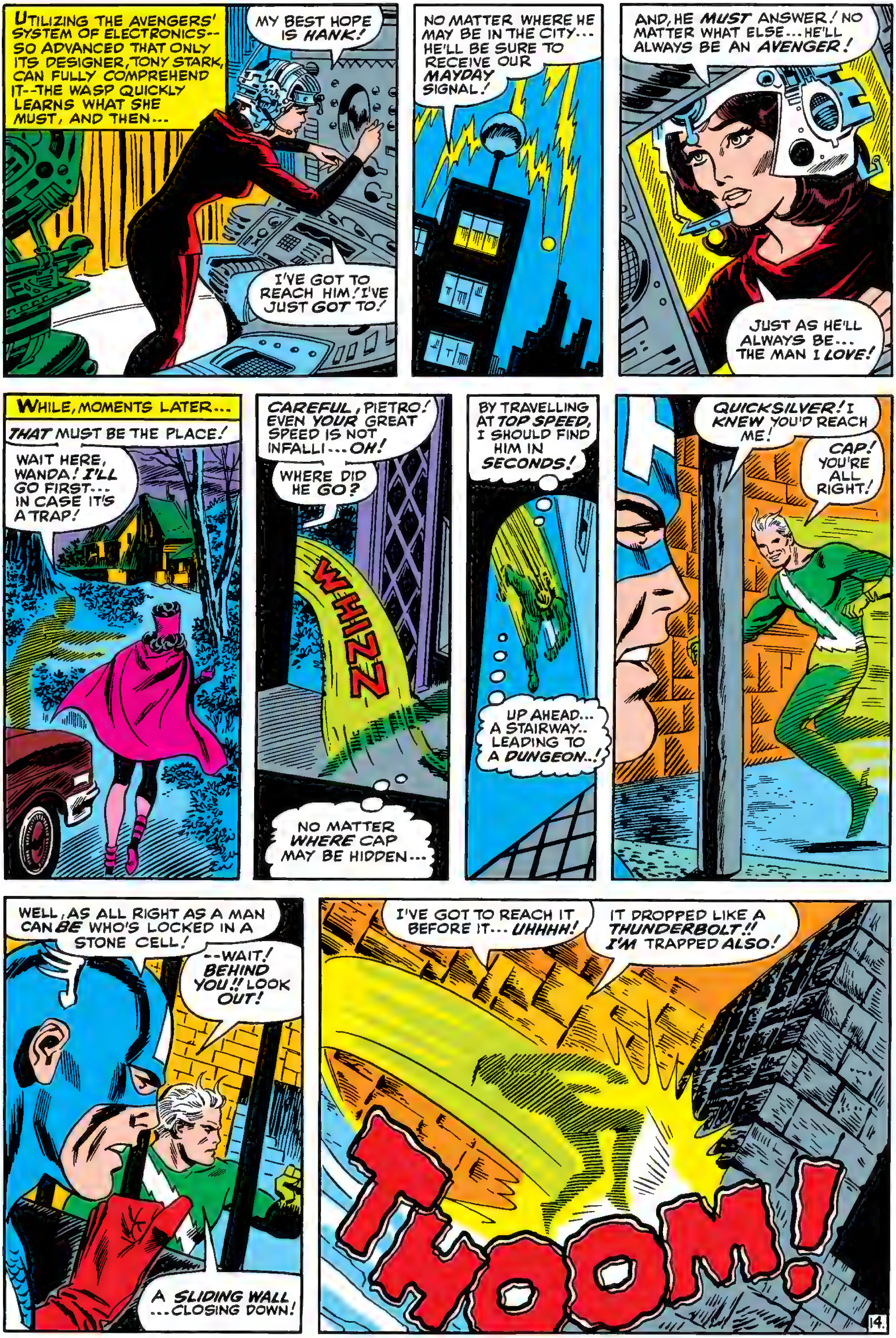

BUT THEN, INCREDIBLY SHRUGGING OFF THE IMPACT, **POWER MAN** STRIKES BACK...
HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN WHY I AM **CALLED** POWER MAN?
THE RAY OF **DR. ZEMO** HAS GIVEN ME MANY TIMES THE STRENGTH OF A NORMAL MAN!
HE RIPPED THAT BLOCK OF **GRANITE** FROM THE FLOOR AND HURLED IT LIKE A **PEBBLE**!!
SHAPE UP, HAWKEYE! YOU'VE A **FIGHT** ON YOUR HANDS!
SPROK!
UNHHH! I **DODGED** IT EASY ENOUGH, BUT THE POWDERY FRAGMENTS GOT INTO MY **EYES** AFTER IT STRUCK THE WALL!
I..I CAN'T **SEE!**
AND A BLINDED HAWKEYE IS NO BETTER THAN... AGGHHHH
ONE BLOW WITH THE FLAT OF MY BLADE WILL PUT AN END TO THIS NONSENSE!
KLANNG!
HE WAS A **FOOL** TO RESIST US!
BUT, NO ONE IN THE DIMLY-LIT CHAMBER NOTICES THE TINY **FEMALE** FLYING SWIFTLY ABOVE...!
I LEFT SO **QUICKLY**, IN ORDER NOT TO LOSE HAWKEYE, THAT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO PREPARE MY **WASP'S STING!**
AND, WITHOUT MY **STINGER**, ALL I CAN DO IS FLY BACK TO THE **AVENGERS** TO SUMMON HELP..!
EVERY SECOND COUNTS! I PRAY THAT HAWKEYE WILL **SURVIVE** UNTIL I RETURN!
GOLIATH MISSING -- WANDERING THE STREETS, WITH NOWHERE TO TURN... CONSUMED BY SHOCK AND SELF-PITY!
AND **HAWKEYE**, HELPLESS AT THE HANDS OF THREE OF OUR MOST DEADLY FOES! WE'VE NEVER BEEN IN SUCH... **WAIT!**
WHAT'S **THAT**... FLYING TOWARDS ME..??
A WHITE-THROATED **SPARROW**... SWOOPING IN FOR THE KILL!
THE ONLY WAY I CAN **SAVE** MYSELF IS BY BECOMING **FULL-SIZE**... BUT THEN, MY WASP'S **WINGS** WILL VANISH... AND I'M UP TOO HIGH.. THE FALL WILL **FINISH** ME!
9.

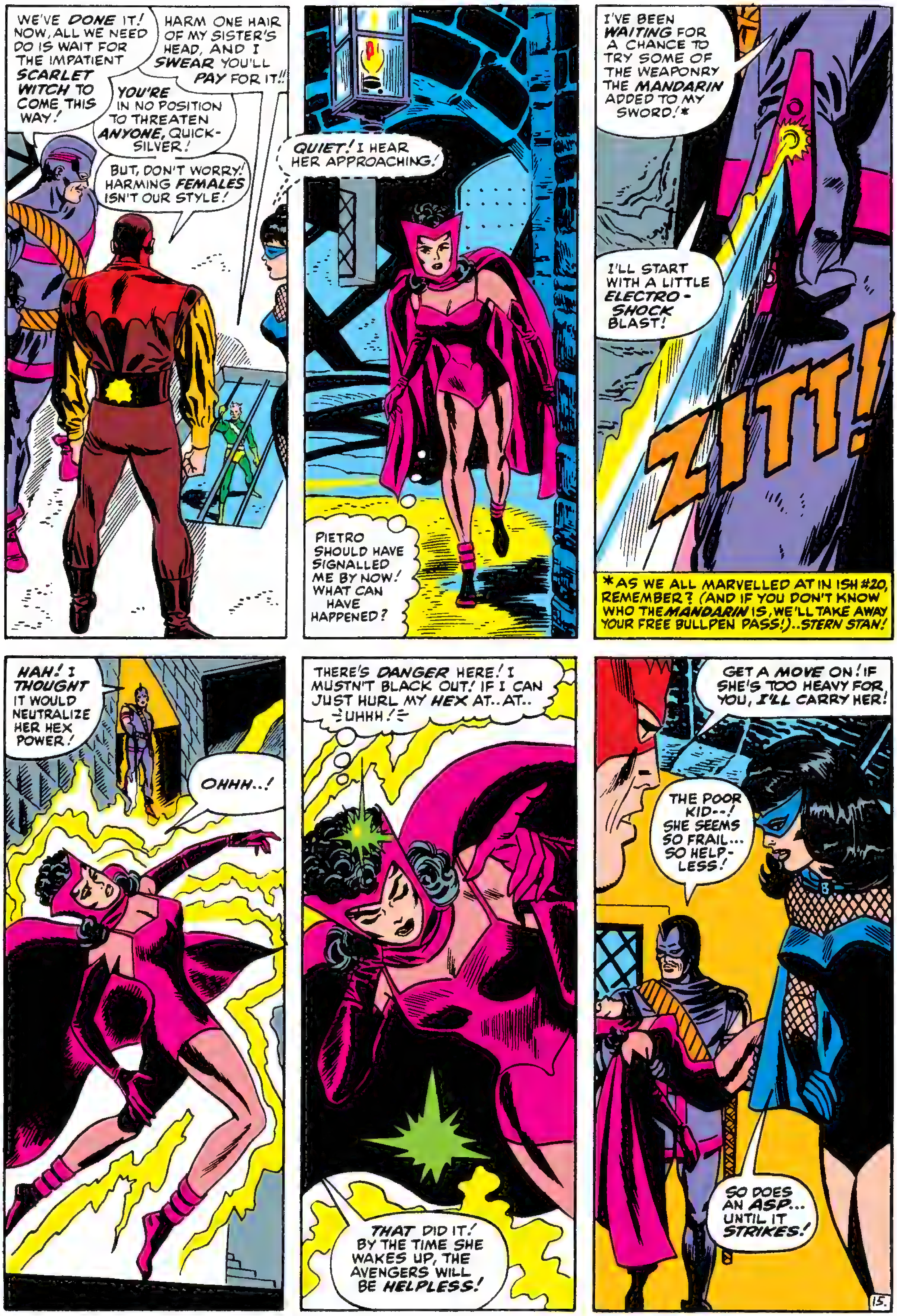

I'VE ONLY *ONE* CHANCE...
IF I CAN JUST *MANEUVER* FAST ENOUGH..!
I *DID* IT!
I FLEW THROUGH HIS BEAK BEFORE HE COULD SNAP IT *SHUT!*
NOW, BY CLUTCHING THE FEATHERS AT THE SIDE OF HIS FACE, I'LL MAKE IT *IMPOSSIBLE* FOR HIM TO SNARE ME!
THEN, A FEW MINUTES LATER...
AT *LAST!* HE'S *LANDING!* I.. I COULDN'T HAVE HELD ON VERY MUCH LONGER..!
THE MOMENT HE COMES TO REST ON A BRANCH, I'LL BECOME *NORMAL-SIZED* AGAIN!
THERE! THANK HEAVEN IT'S *OVER!*
I HOPE WHAT YOU'VE JUST SEEN DOESN'T CAUSE YOU A *TRAUMA,* BIRDIE!
OH! MY WEIGHT IS TOO MUCH FOR THE BRANCH! IT... IT'S *SNAPPING..!*
UHHHH...!
SO EXHAUSTED BY HER ORDEAL IS THE VALIANT GIRL, THAT SHE CANNOT CHANGE BACK TO THE WINGED *WASP* IN TIME TO BREAK HER FALL!
BUT NOW, WE MUST LEAVE THE FALLEN AVENGER AS SHE LIES SILENT AND STILL IN THE LONELY GLEN... FOR THERE ARE *OTHER* URGENT MATTERS WHICH CONCERN US---
--- MATTERS SUCH US... *THIS!* WITHOUT THE *WARNING* WHICH THE WASP SO DESPERATELY TRIED TO BRING, *CAPTAIN AMERICA* IS TAKEN BY SURPRISE AT AVENGERS HQ ---!
EN GARDE, AVENGER! WE MEET AGAIN... TO *FIGHT* AGAIN!
THE *SWORDSMAN!* WASN'T *ONE* DEFEAT *ENOUGH* FOR YOU, MISTER?*
I'LL WAIT AND SEE HOW MY BLADE-WIELDING PARTNER FARES BEFORE *POWER MAN* ENTERS THE BATTLE!
WHY WOULD HE CHOOSE TO ATTACK *NOW?* IS IT PART OF SOME *LARGER* PLAN?
*SURELY WE DON'T HAVE TO TELL *YOU* THAT CAP IS REFERRING TO THE NOW-CLASSIC BATTLE IN *AVENGERS #20!*--ARCHIVIST STAN.

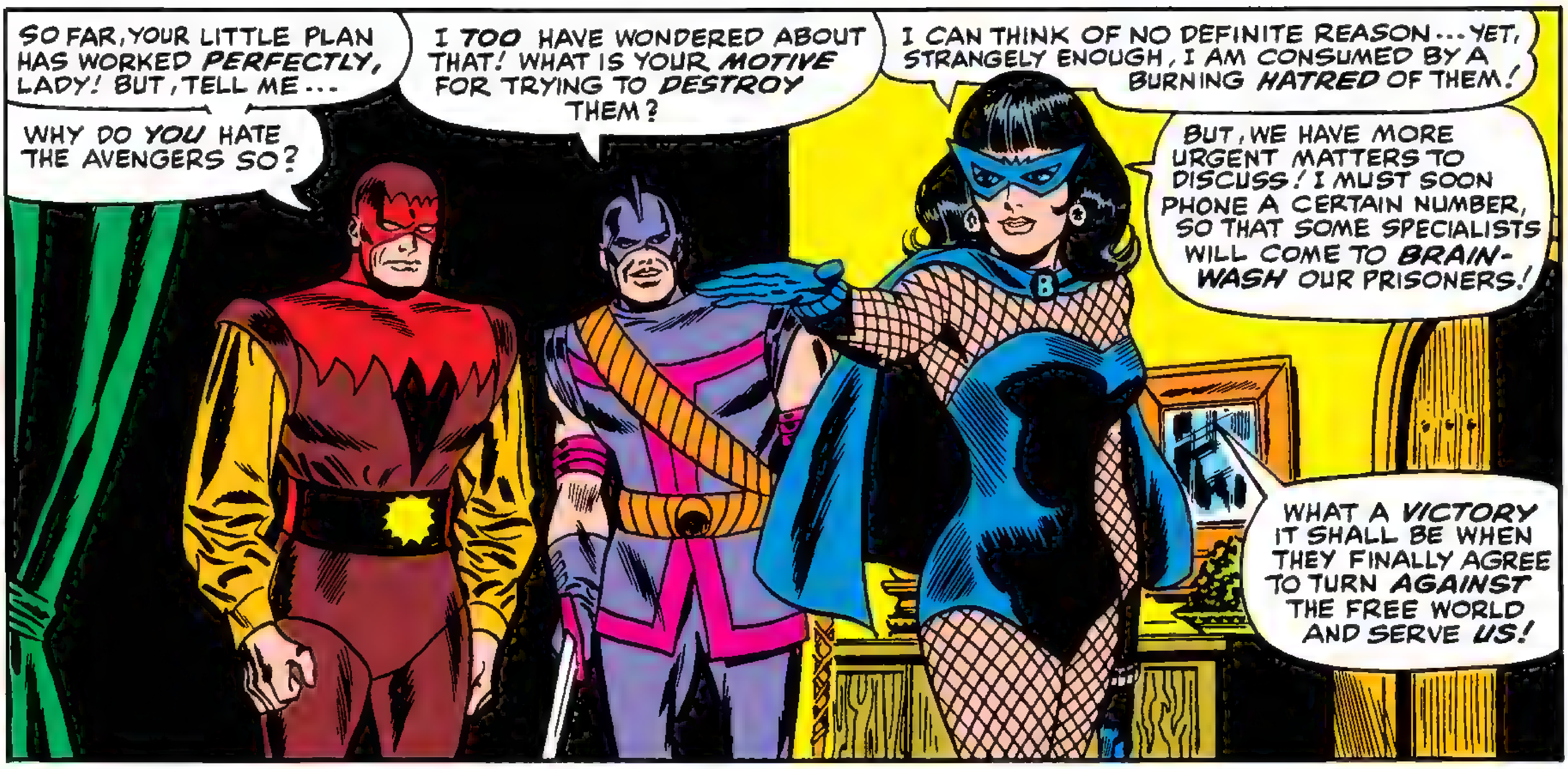

IF IT'S A *FIGHT* YOU'RE AFTER, FELLA...
I'LL SEE THAT YOU GET YOUR *MONEY'S* WORTH!
BLAST THAT EVER-PRESENT *SHIELD* OF YOURS! ONCE I SLASH *THAT* AWAY FROM YOU--
--YOU'LL BE *DEFENSELESS* BEFORE ME!
KLANG!
IN *HIS* HANDS, THAT ROUND METAL DISC IS LIKE THE ULTIMATE WEAPON!
I'VE *GOT* TO FIND A WAY TO *OVERCOME* IT...!
IT SEEMS YOU CAN USE SOME *HELP*, MY FRIEND!
NO! STAY *OUT* OF IT, POWER MAN!
SPANG!
POWER MAN!! IS *HE* INVOLVED IN THIS, *TOO?*
IT SEEMS I HAVE MY JOB CUT OUT FOR ME...!
THANG!
FTING!
PLANK!
AND SO...
IF I CAN JUST BRUSH HIS *SWORD* AWAY LONG ENOUGH TO LAND *ONE* BLOW...
BLANGG!
WHAT'S HOLDING HIM *UP?* HOW CAN HE STAND SUCH *PUMMELING?!!*
BUT, SUDDENLY...
I'M BEING *LIFTED*... LIKE A *TOY!!*
I HAVE SEEN *ENOUGH!*
ONLY *RAW STRENGTH* CAN DEFEAT THIS MAN!!
STRENGTH SUCH AS ONLY *POWER MAN* POSSESSES!
HE'S HURLING ME TOWARD THE *WALL!* I'VE GOT TO GO *LIMP*... CUSHION THE IMPACT WITH MY SHOULDER...! *UHHN!*
THUD!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO INTERFERE!
NOBODY TELLS POWER MAN *ANYTHING!*

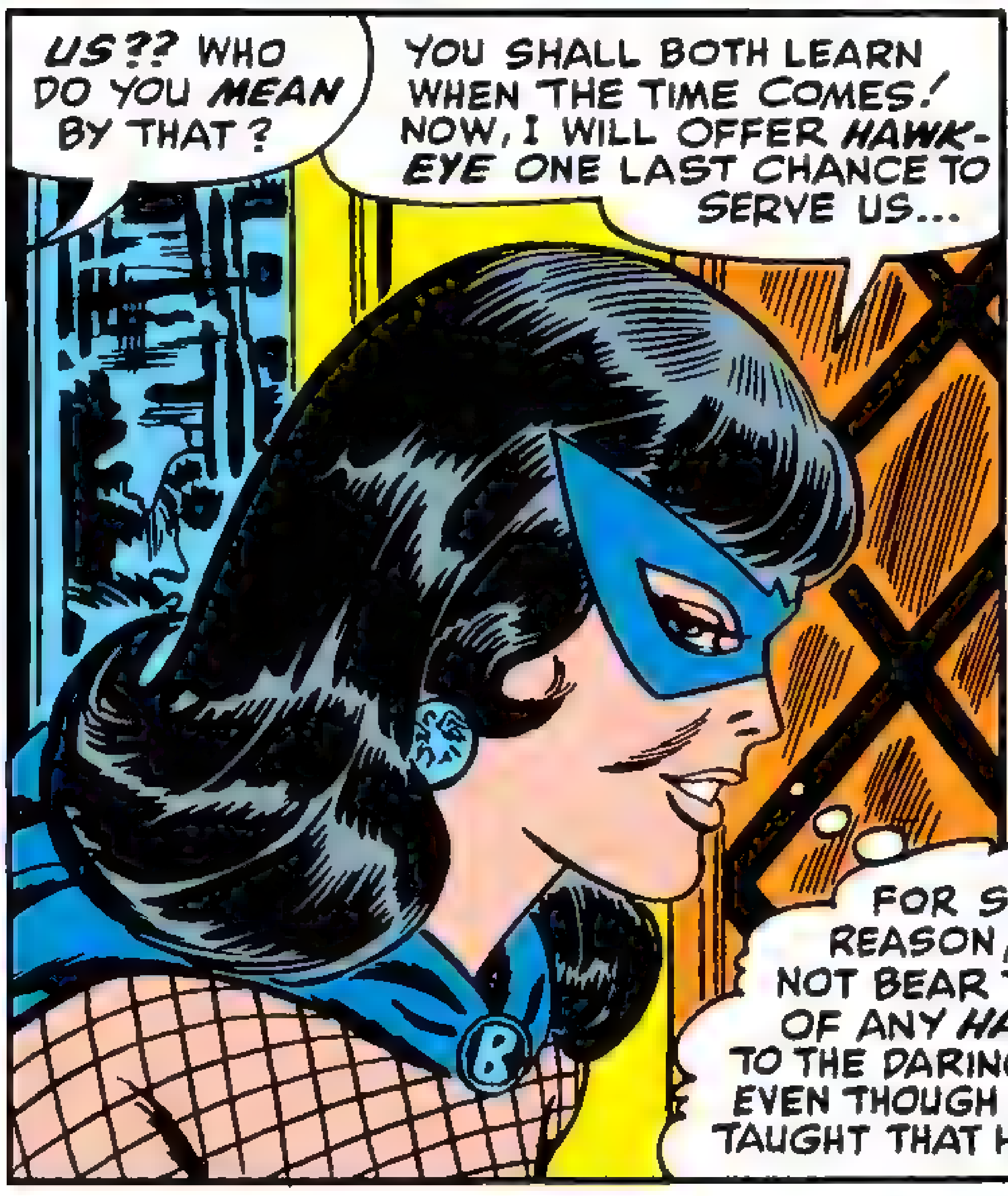

YOU ARROGANT FOOL! EVEN WITH ALL YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED STRENGTH, YOU COULDN'T PUT CAPTAIN AMERICA OUT OF ACTION!
WITH HIS AGILITY AND ATHLETIC PROWESS, HE TOOK THE BLOW IN STRIDE, AND NOW--- LOOK OUT!
I WONDERED WHEN WE'D BE HEARING FROM YOU AGAIN, STRONG MAN! HERE'S A WELCOME PRESENT FOR YOU!
WOK!
BUT, TO POWER MAN, SUCH AN ATTACK IS NO MORE DAMAGING THAN THE THROWING OF A TIN CAN AT THE SIDE OF A TANK..!
HE'S LIKE A GREAT HUMAN FIGHTING MACHINE... TURNING FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER WITHOUT EVEN BREAKING HIS STRIDE!
OH NO YOU DON'T! I SAW THAT LUNGE, SWORDSMAN!
BAM!
THIS TIME I MUST GIVE HIM NO CHANCE TO MAKE ANOTHER MOVE!
EVEN THE MIGHTY RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER CANNOT FACE TWO DIRECTIONS AT ONCE, AND SO... A SPLIT-SECOND LATER ...
GOT YOU!
UNNHHH..!
PERHAPS THIS WAY IS BEST!
IN TIME, HE MIGHT HAVE DEFEATED US BOTH!
AND NOW I SHALL NOT RELAX MY PRESSURE UNTIL YOU'VE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS!

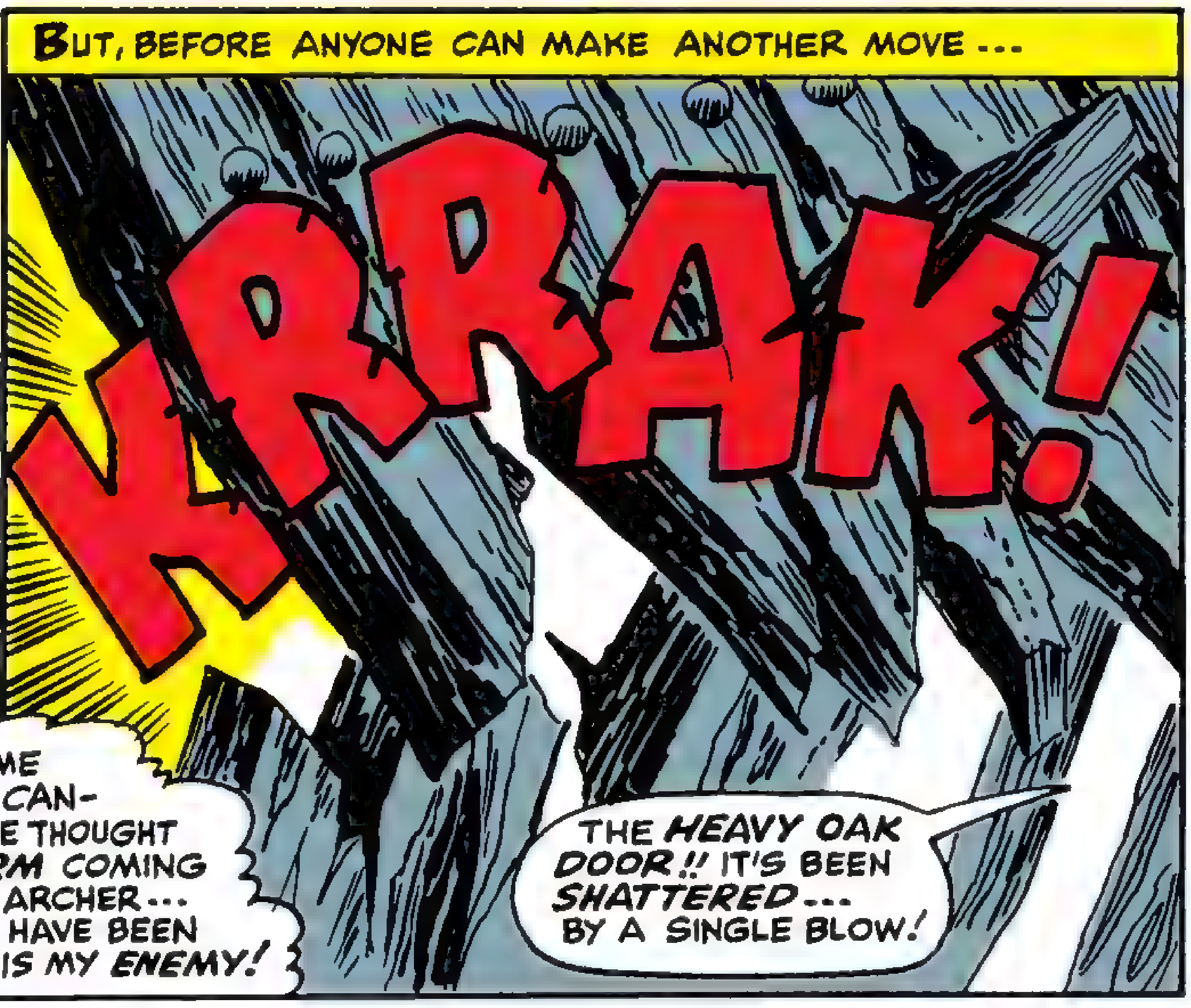

AND, SO IT IS THAT THE DAUNTLESS ADVENTURER WAKES UP SOME TIME LATER TO FIND HIMSELF IMPRISONED IN A DARK, DANK, DESOLATE DUNGEON...!
IF ANYTHING CAN KEEP A FELLA FROM GETTING A SWELLED HEAD ABOUT HIS OWN ABILITY, IT'S FIGHTING TWO CHARACTERS LIKE POWER MAN AND HIS SWORD-SLINGING BUDDY!
WELL, SITTING HERE AND PHILOSOPHIZING WON'T GET ME OUT OF THIS PLACE... BUT, CONTACTING THE OTHER AVENGERS MIGHT!
IF MY LUCK HELD OUT, THEY DIDN'T THINK TO EXAMINE MY WRIST, UNDERNEATH MY GLOVE!
GREAT! MY COMMUNI-CRYSTAL IS STILL INTACT!
AVENGERS, ASSEMBLE! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
AND, IN THE HEART OF THE SPRAWLING METROPOLIS...
IT'S FROM CAP! HE'S BEEN IMPRISONED IN A DUNGEON!
INTO YOUR COSTUME, WANDA... QUICKLY!
IMPRISONED, PIETRO? BY WHOM?
NO TIME FOR THAT NOW! WE'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THE ULTRA-SONIC RADIO SIGNALS TILL WE LOCATE HIM!
THUS, SECONDS LATER...
IT'S LUCKY TONY STARK FITTED OUR CAR WITH A RADIO BEAM RECEIVING-AND-ANALYZING DEVICE!
THE SIGNAL IS GROWING STRONGER! WE MUST BE GETTING CLOSE!
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, A WEARY, MYSTIFIED GIRL FINALLY REACHES AVENGERS HQ...
THERE'S NO ONE HERE!
BUT, THERE MUST ALWAYS BE AN AVENGER ON DUTY! IT'S OUR CARDINAL RULE!
NO ONE WOULD HAVE LEFT HIS POST UNLESS FORCED TO! IT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING...!
I'M TOO LATE! THE SWORDSMAN AND POWER MAN HAVE SOMEHOW STRUCK FIRST!
WAIT! THE MESSAGE LIGHT IS ON! I'VE GOT TO DECODE THE SIGNAL AND LEARN WHERE THEY WENT!
13.

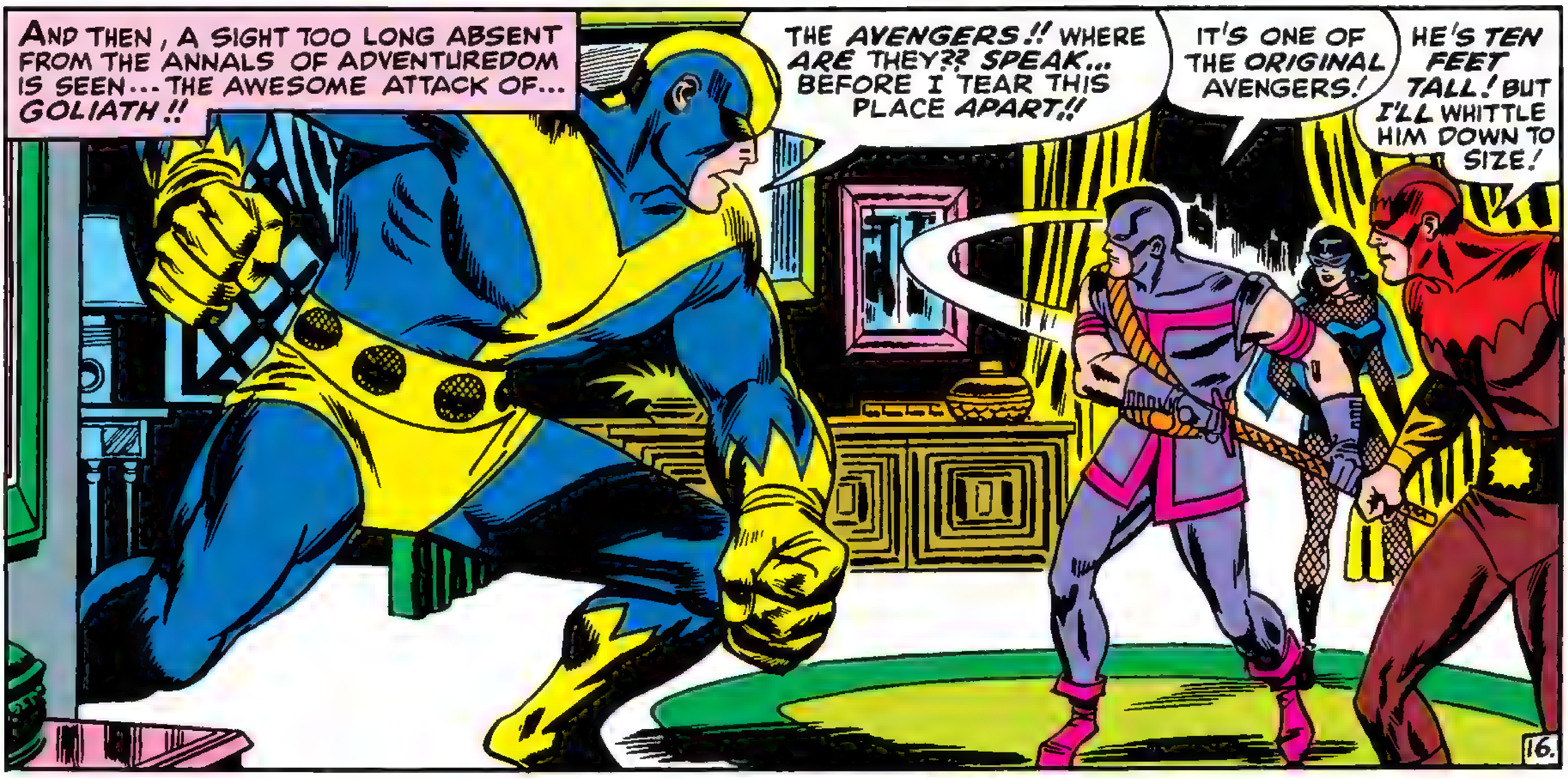

UTILIZING THE AVENGERS' SYSTEM OF ELECTRONICS--SO ADVANCED THAT ONLY ITS DESIGNER, TONY STARK, CAN FULLY COMPREHEND IT--THE WASP QUICKLY LEARNS WHAT SHE MUST, AND THEN...
MY BEST HOPE IS *HANK!*
I'VE GOT TO REACH HIM! I'VE JUST *GOT* TO!
NO MATTER WHERE HE MAY BE IN THE CITY... HE'LL BE SURE TO RECEIVE OUR *MAYDAY* SIGNAL!
AND, HE *MUST* ANSWER! NO MATTER WHAT ELSE... HE'LL ALWAYS BE AN *AVENGER!*
JUST AS HE'LL ALWAYS BE... THE MAN I *LOVE!*
WHILE, MOMENTS LATER...
THAT MUST BE THE PLACE!
WAIT HERE, WANDA! *I'LL* GO FIRST... IN CASE IT'S A TRAP!
CAREFUL, PIETRO! EVEN *YOUR* GREAT SPEED IS NOT INFALLI... *OH!*
WHERE DID HE *GO?*
WHIZZ
NO MATTER *WHERE* CAP MAY BE HIDDEN...
BY TRAVELLING AT *TOP SPEED*, I SHOULD FIND HIM IN *SECONDS!*
UP AHEAD... A STAIRWAY.. LEADING TO A *DUNGEON..!*
QUICKSILVER! I *KNEW* YOU'D REACH ME!
CAP! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
WELL, AS ALL RIGHT AS A MAN CAN *BE* WHO'S LOCKED IN A STONE CELL!
--WAIT! *BEHIND YOU!!* LOOK *OUT!*
A *SLIDING WALL* ...CLOSING DOWN!
I'VE GOT TO REACH IT BEFORE IT... *UHHHH!*
IT DROPPED LIKE A *THUNDERBOLT!!* *I'M* TRAPPED *ALSO!*
THOOM!

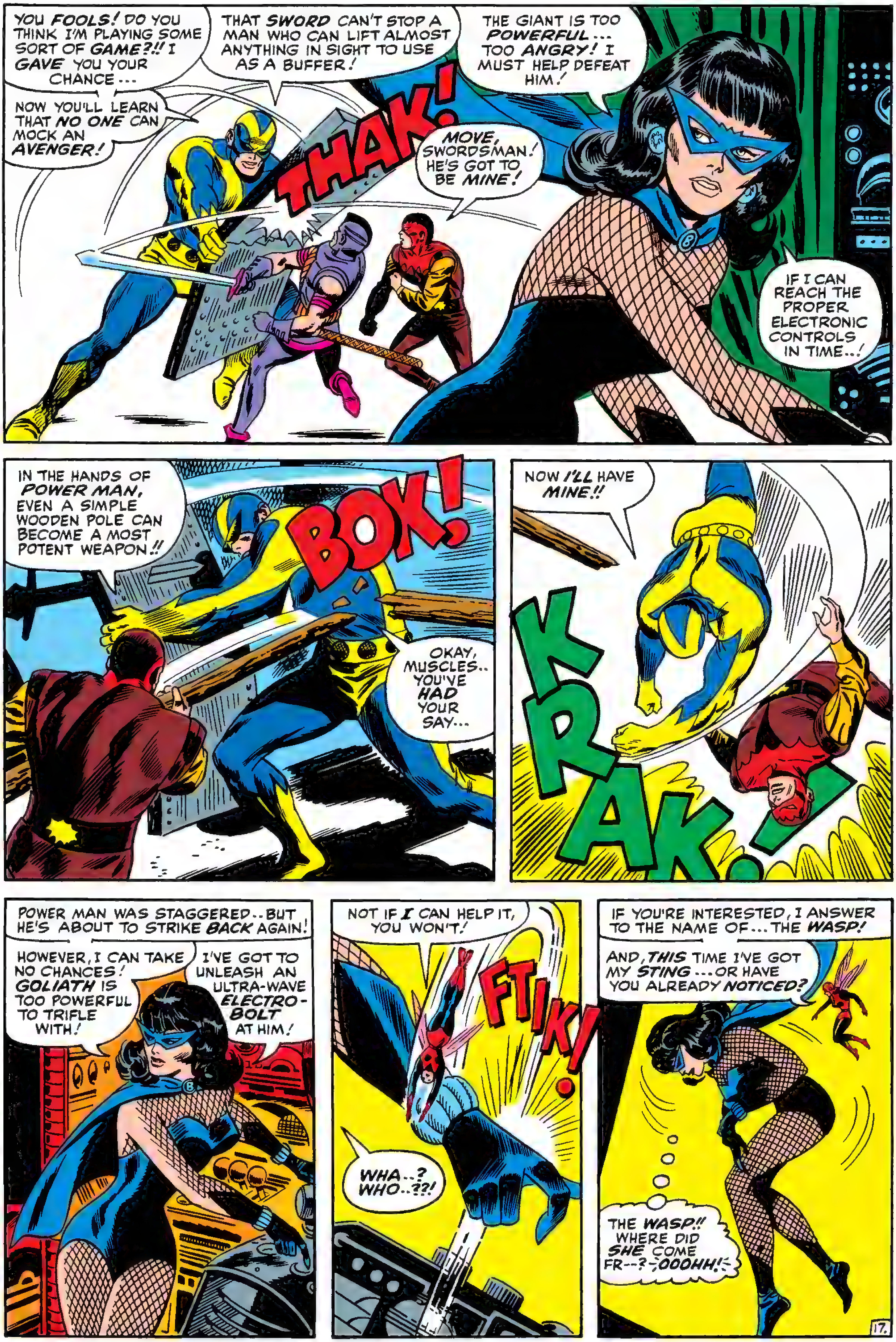

WE'VE DONE IT! NOW, ALL WE NEED DO IS WAIT FOR THE IMPATIENT SCARLET WITCH TO COME THIS WAY!
HARM ONE HAIR OF MY SISTER'S HEAD, AND I SWEAR YOU'LL PAY FOR IT!!
YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO THREATEN ANYONE, QUICK-SILVER!
BUT, DON'T WORRY! HARMING FEMALES ISN'T OUR STYLE!
QUIET! I HEAR HER APPROACHING!
PIETRO SHOULD HAVE SIGNALLED ME BY NOW! WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED?
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO TRY SOME OF THE WEAPONRY THE MANDARIN ADDED TO MY SWORD!*
I'LL START WITH A LITTLE ELECTRO-SHOCK BLAST!
ZITT!
*AS WE ALL MARVELLED AT IN ISH #20, REMEMBER? (AND IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHO THE MANDARIN IS, WE'LL TAKE AWAY YOUR FREE BULLPEN PASS!)..STERN STAN!
HAH! I THOUGHT IT WOULD NEUTRALIZE HER HEX POWER!
OHHH..!
THERE'S DANGER HERE! I MUSTN'T BLACK OUT! IF I CAN JUST HURL MY HEX AT.. AT.. UHHH!
THAT DID IT! BY THE TIME SHE WAKES UP, THE AVENGERS WILL BE HELPLESS!
GET A MOVE ON! IF SHE'S TOO HEAVY FOR YOU, I'LL CARRY HER!
THE POOR KID--! SHE SEEMS SO FRAIL... SO HELP-LESS!
SO DOES AN ASP... UNTIL IT STRIKES!

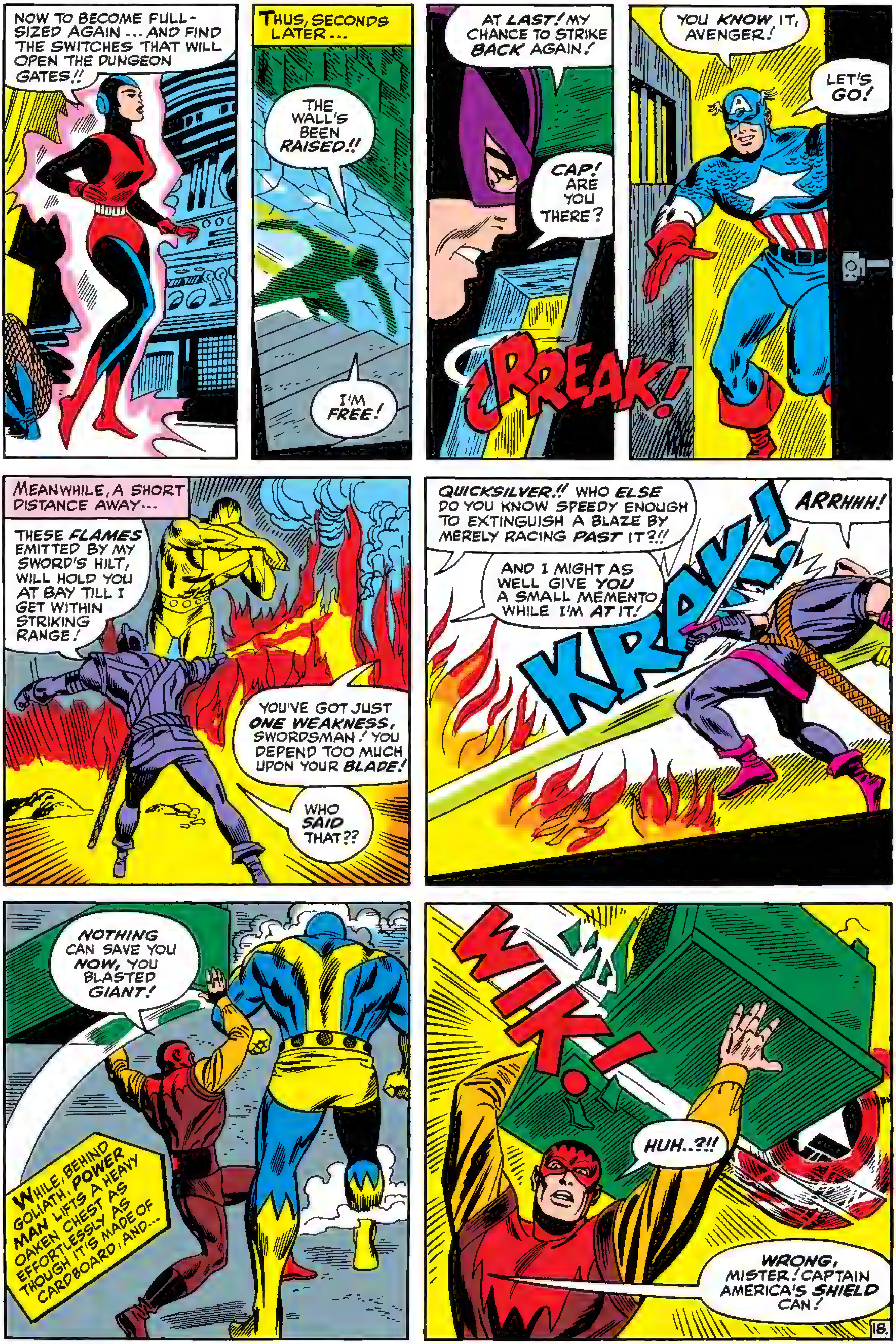

SO FAR, YOUR LITTLE PLAN HAS WORKED *PERFECTLY*, LADY! BUT, TELL ME...
WHY DO *YOU* HATE THE AVENGERS SO?
I *TOO* HAVE WONDERED ABOUT THAT! WHAT IS YOUR *MOTIVE* FOR TRYING TO *DESTROY* THEM?
I CAN THINK OF NO DEFINITE REASON... YET, STRANGELY ENOUGH, I AM CONSUMED BY A BURNING *HATRED* OF THEM!
BUT, WE HAVE MORE URGENT MATTERS TO DISCUSS! I MUST SOON PHONE A CERTAIN NUMBER, SO THAT SOME SPECIALISTS WILL COME TO *BRAINWASH* OUR PRISONERS!
WHAT A *VICTORY* IT SHALL BE WHEN THEY FINALLY AGREE TO TURN *AGAINST* THE FREE WORLD AND SERVE *US!*

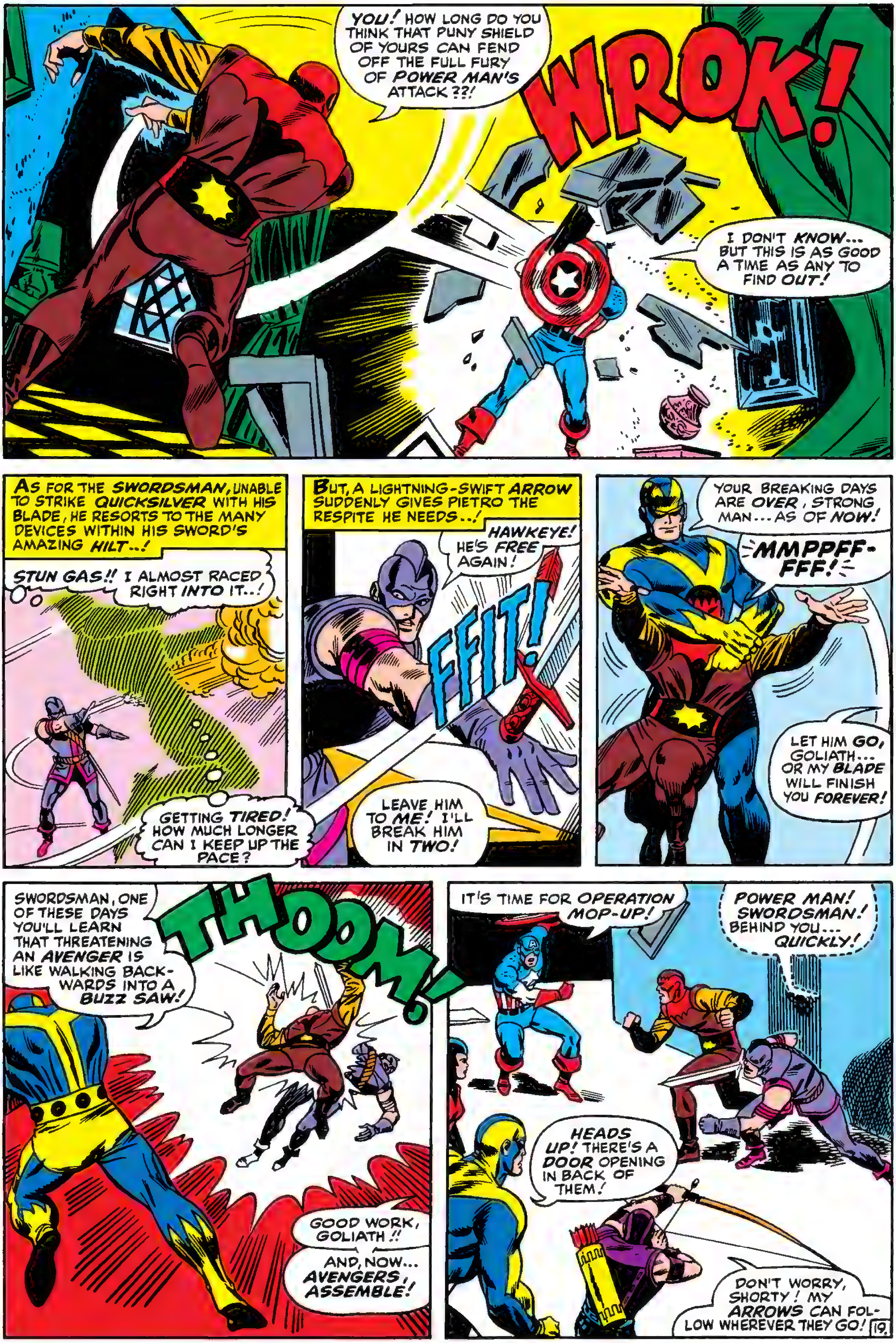

US?? WHO DO YOU *MEAN* BY THAT?
YOU SHALL BOTH LEARN WHEN THE TIME COMES! NOW, I WILL OFFER *HAWKEYE* ONE LAST CHANCE TO SERVE US...
FOR SOME REASON, I CANNOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF ANY *HARM* COMING TO THE DARING ARCHER... EVEN THOUGH I HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THAT HE IS MY *ENEMY!*

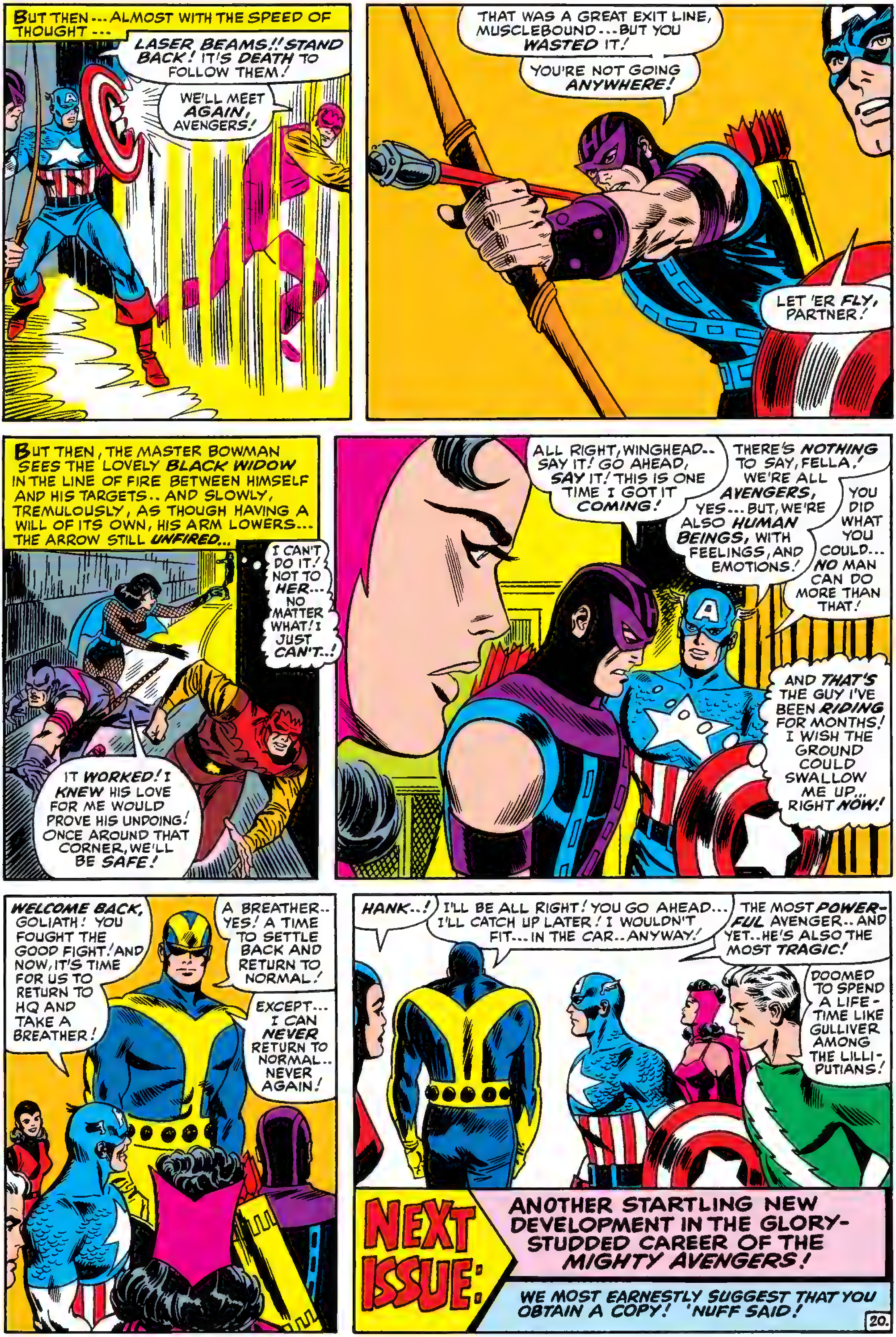

BUT, BEFORE ANYONE CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE...
KRRAK!
THE *HEAVY OAK DOOR!!* IT'S BEEN *SHATTERED*... BY A SINGLE BLOW!


AND THEN, A SIGHT TOO LONG ABSENT FROM THE ANNALS OF ADVENTUREDOM IS SEEN... THE AWESOME ATTACK OF... *GOLIATH!!*
THE *AVENGERS!!* WHERE *ARE* THEY?? *SPEAK...* BEFORE I TEAR THIS PLACE *APART!!*
IT'S ONE OF THE *ORIGINAL* AVENGERS!
HE'S *TEN FEET TALL!* BUT *I'LL* WHITTLE HIM DOWN TO SIZE!

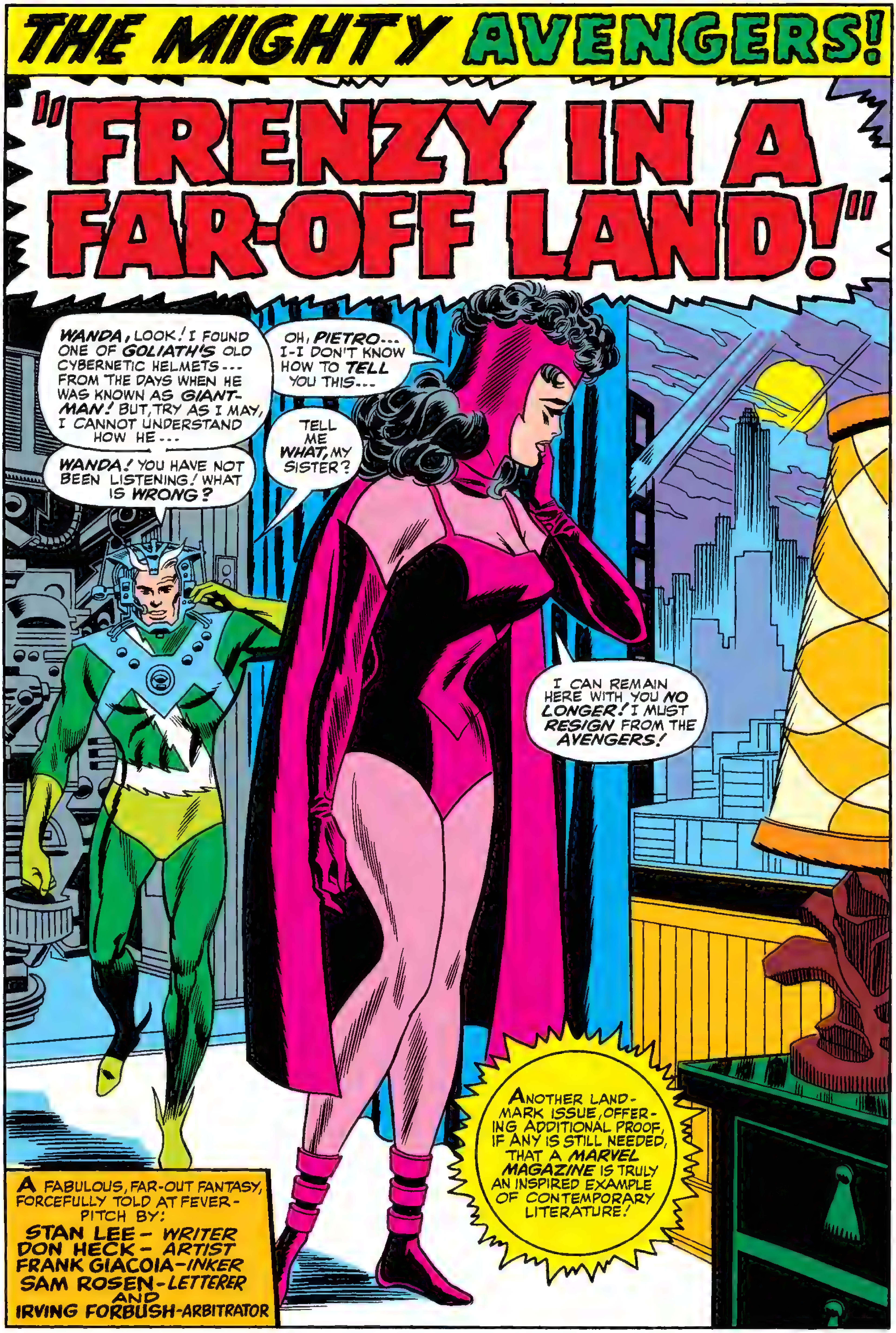

YOU FOOLS! DO YOU THINK I'M PLAYING SOME SORT OF GAME?!! I GAVE YOU YOUR CHANCE ...
NOW YOU'LL LEARN THAT NO ONE CAN MOCK AN AVENGER!
THAT SWORD CAN'T STOP A MAN WHO CAN LIFT ALMOST ANYTHING IN SIGHT TO USE AS A BUFFER!
THAK!
THE GIANT IS TOO POWERFUL ... TOO ANGRY! I MUST HELP DEFEAT HIM!
MOVE, SWORDSMAN! HE'S GOT TO BE MINE!
IF I CAN REACH THE PROPER ELECTRONIC CONTROLS IN TIME..!
IN THE HANDS OF POWER MAN, EVEN A SIMPLE WOODEN POLE CAN BECOME A MOST POTENT WEAPON!!
BOK!
OKAY, MUSCLES.. YOU'VE HAD YOUR SAY...
NOW I'LL HAVE MINE!!
KRAK!
POWER MAN WAS STAGGERED..BUT HE'S ABOUT TO STRIKE BACK AGAIN!
HOWEVER, I CAN TAKE NO CHANCES! GOLIATH IS TOO POWERFUL TO TRIFLE WITH!
I'VE GOT TO UNLEASH AN ULTRA-WAVE ELECTRO-BOLT AT HIM!
NOT IF I CAN HELP IT, YOU WON'T!
FTIK!
WHA..? WHO..??!
IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, I ANSWER TO THE NAME OF ... THE WASP!
AND, THIS TIME I'VE GOT MY STING ... OR HAVE YOU ALREADY NOTICED?
THE WASP!! WHERE DID SHE COME FR--? OOOHH!

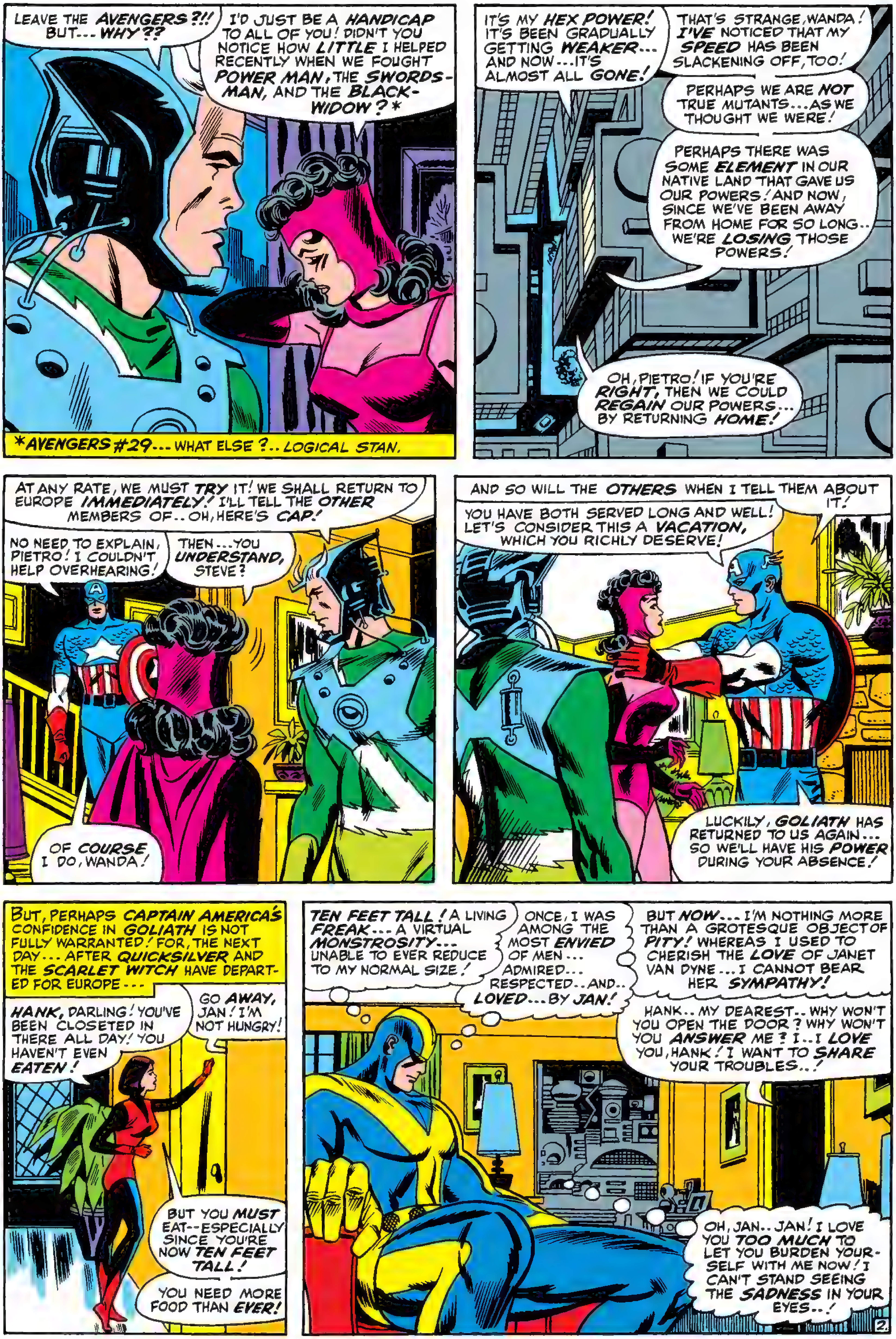

NOW TO BECOME FULL-SIZED AGAIN ... AND FIND THE SWITCHES THAT WILL OPEN THE DUNGEON GATES!!
THUS, SECONDS LATER...
THE WALL'S BEEN RAISED!!
I'M FREE!
AT LAST! MY CHANCE TO STRIKE BACK AGAIN!
CAP! ARE YOU THERE?
CRREAK!
YOU KNOW IT, AVENGER!
LET'S GO!
MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY...
THESE FLAMES EMITTED BY MY SWORD'S HILT, WILL HOLD YOU AT BAY TILL I GET WITHIN STRIKING RANGE!
YOU'VE GOT JUST ONE WEAKNESS, SWORDSMAN! YOU DEPEND TOO MUCH UPON YOUR BLADE!
WHO SAID THAT??
QUICKSILVER!! WHO ELSE DO YOU KNOW SPEEDY ENOUGH TO EXTINGUISH A BLAZE BY MERELY RACING PAST IT?!!
AND I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE YOU A SMALL MEMENTO WHILE I'M AT IT!
KRAK!
ARRHHH!
NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU NOW, YOU BLASTED GIANT!
WHILE, BEHIND GOLIATH, POWER MAN LIFTS A HEAVY OAKEN CHEST AS EFFORTLESSLY AS THOUGH IT'S MADE OF CARDBOARD, AND...
WIK!
HUH..?!!
WRONG, MISTER! CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SHIELD CAN!
18.

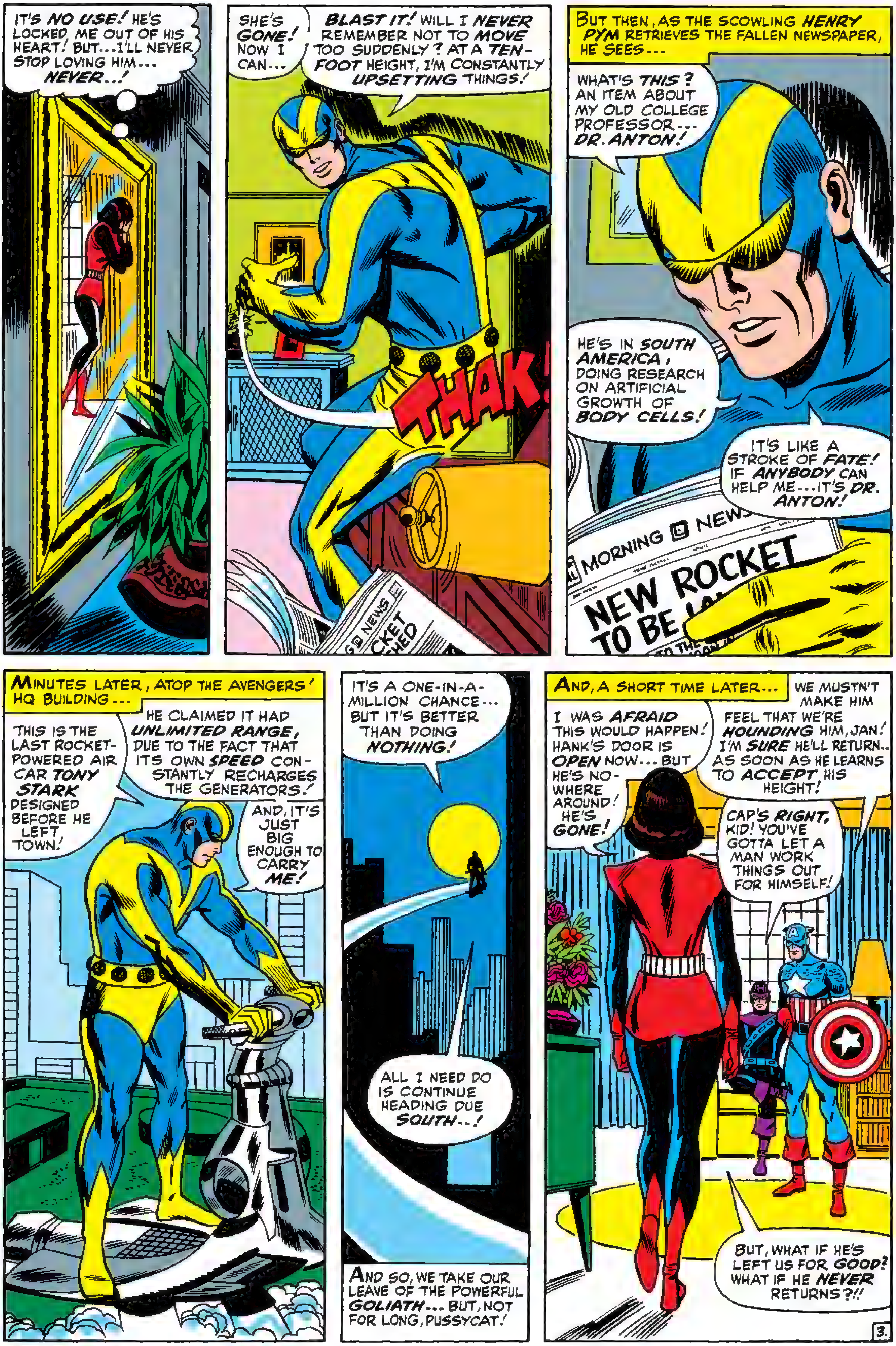

YOU! HOW LONG DO YOU THINK THAT PUNY SHIELD OF YOURS CAN FEND OFF THE FULL FURY OF POWER MAN'S ATTACK ??!
WROK!
I DON'T KNOW... BUT THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO FIND OUT!
AS FOR THE SWORDSMAN, UNABLE TO STRIKE QUICKSILVER WITH HIS BLADE, HE RESORTS TO THE MANY DEVICES WITHIN HIS SWORD'S AMAZING HILT..!
STUN GAS!! I ALMOST RACED RIGHT INTO IT...!
GETTING TIRED! HOW MUCH LONGER CAN I KEEP UP THE PACE?
BUT, A LIGHTNING-SWIFT ARROW SUDDENLY GIVES PIETRO THE RESPITE HE NEEDS..!
HAWKEYE! HE'S FREE AGAIN!
FFIT!
LEAVE HIM TO ME! I'LL BREAK HIM IN TWO!
YOUR BREAKING DAYS ARE OVER, STRONG MAN... AS OF NOW!
MMPPFF-FFF!
LET HIM GO, GOLIATH... OR MY BLADE WILL FINISH YOU FOREVER!
SWORDSMAN, ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU'LL LEARN THAT THREATENING AN AVENGER IS LIKE WALKING BACKWARDS INTO A BUZZ SAW!
THOOM!
GOOD WORK, GOLIATH!!
AND, NOW... AVENGERS, ASSEMBLE!
IT'S TIME FOR OPERATION MOP-UP!
POWER MAN! SWORDSMAN! BEHIND YOU... QUICKLY!
HEADS UP! THERE'S A DOOR OPENING IN BACK OF THEM!
DON'T WORRY, SHORTY! MY ARROWS CAN FOLLOW WHEREVER THEY GO!

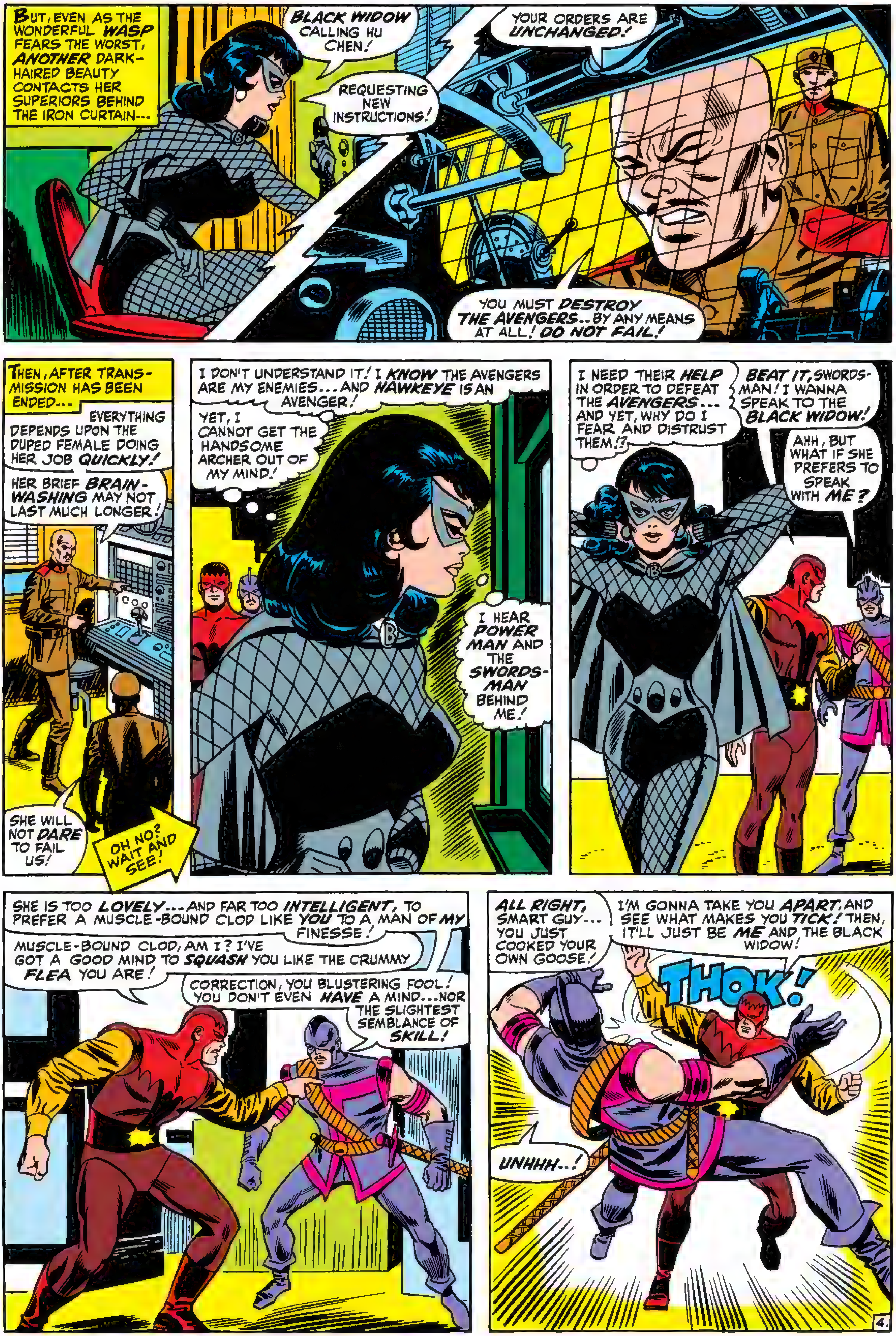

BUT THEN ... ALMOST WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT ...
LASER BEAMS!! STAND BACK! IT'S DEATH TO FOLLOW THEM!
WE'LL MEET AGAIN, AVENGERS!
THAT WAS A GREAT EXIT LINE, MUSCLEBOUND ... BUT YOU WASTED IT!
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
LET 'ER FLY, PARTNER!
BUT THEN, THE MASTER BOWMAN SEES THE LOVELY BLACK WIDOW IN THE LINE OF FIRE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS TARGETS.. AND SLOWLY, TREMULOUSLY, AS THOUGH HAVING A WILL OF ITS OWN, HIS ARM LOWERS... THE ARROW STILL UNFIRED...
I CAN'T DO IT! NOT TO HER... NO MATTER WHAT! I JUST CAN'T..!
IT WORKED! I KNEW HIS LOVE FOR ME WOULD PROVE HIS UNDOING! ONCE AROUND THAT CORNER, WE'LL BE SAFE!
ALL RIGHT, WINGHEAD.. SAY IT! GO AHEAD, SAY IT! THIS IS ONE TIME I GOT IT COMING!
THERE'S NOTHING TO SAY, FELLA! WE'RE ALL AVENGERS, YES... BUT, WE'RE ALSO HUMAN BEINGS, WITH FEELINGS, AND EMOTIONS!
YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD... NO MAN CAN DO MORE THAN THAT!
AND THAT'S THE GUY I'VE BEEN RIDING FOR MONTHS! I WISH THE GROUND COULD SWALLOW ME UP... RIGHT NOW!
WELCOME BACK, GOLIATH! YOU FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT! AND NOW, IT'S TIME FOR US TO RETURN TO HQ AND TAKE A BREATHER!
A BREATHER.. YES! A TIME TO SETTLE BACK AND RETURN TO NORMAL!
EXCEPT... I CAN NEVER RETURN TO NORMAL.. NEVER AGAIN!
HANK..!
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT! YOU GO AHEAD... I'LL CATCH UP LATER! I WOULDN'T FIT... IN THE CAR.. ANYWAY!
THE MOST POWERFUL AVENGER.. AND YET.. HE'S ALSO THE MOST TRAGIC!
DOOMED TO SPEND A LIFETIME LIKE GULLIVER AMONG THE LILLIPUTIANS!
NEXT ISSUE:
ANOTHER STARTLING NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE GLORY-STUDDED CAREER OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
WE MOST EARNESTLY SUGGEST THAT YOU OBTAIN A COPY! 'NUFF SAID!

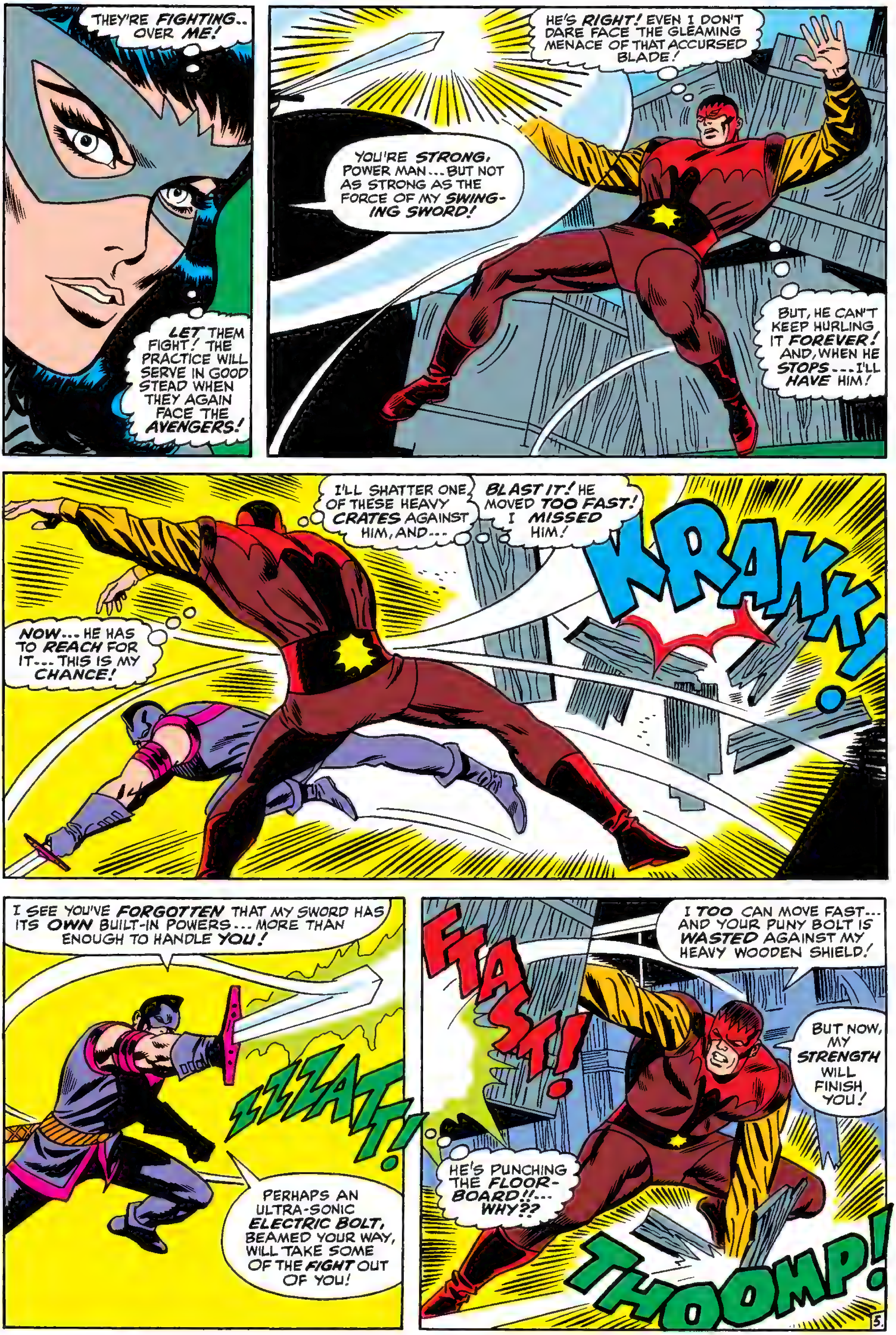
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
30
JULY
IND.
12¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
"FRENZY IN A FAR-OFF LAND!"

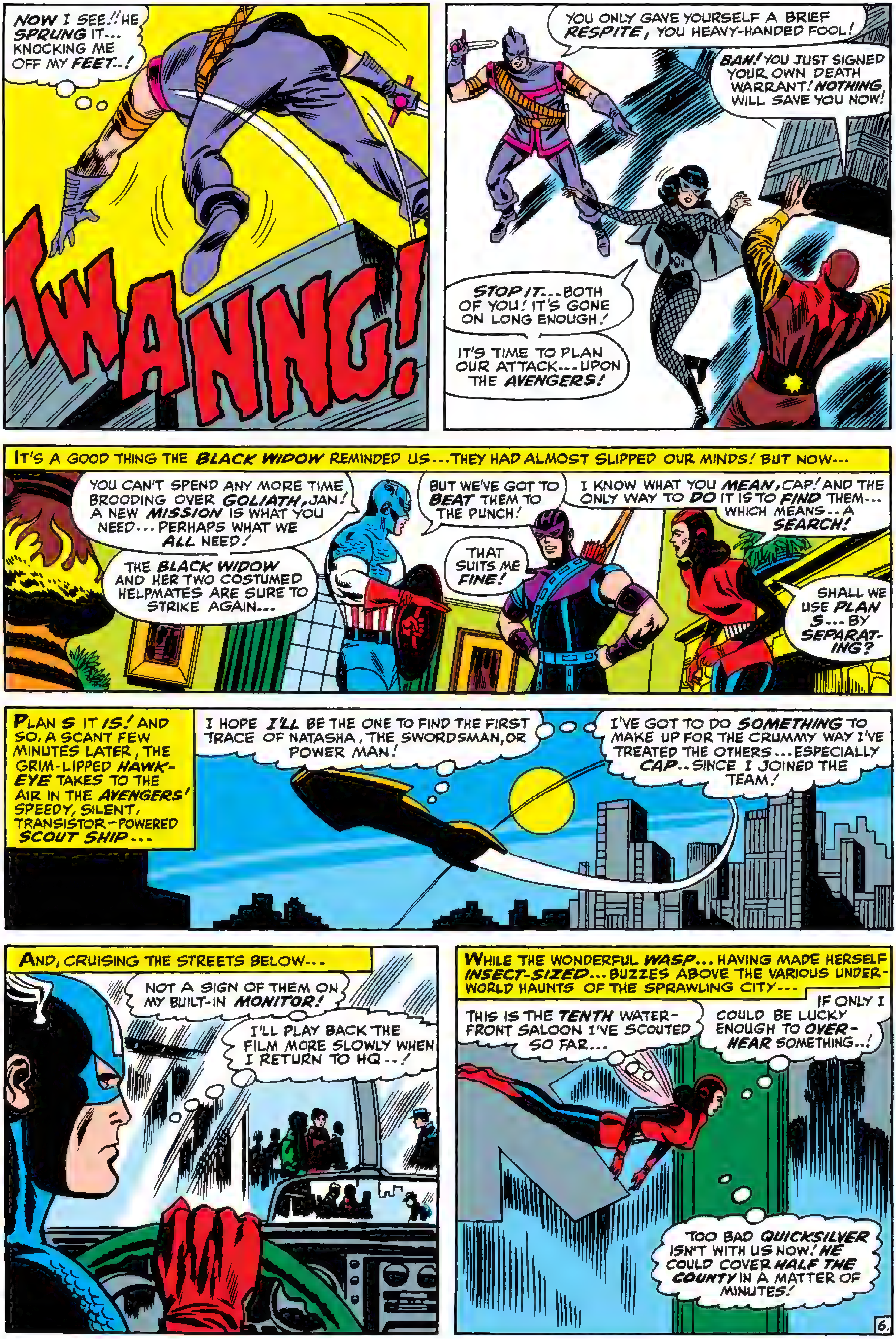

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"FRENZY IN A FAR-OFF LAND!"
WANDA, LOOK! I FOUND ONE OF GOLIATH'S OLD CYBERNETIC HELMETS--- FROM THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS KNOWN AS GIANT-MAN! BUT, TRY AS I MAY, I CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW HE---
OH, PIETRO--- I-I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THIS---
WANDA! YOU HAVE NOT BEEN LISTENING! WHAT IS WRONG?
TELL ME WHAT, MY SISTER?
I CAN REMAIN HERE WITH YOU NO LONGER! I MUST RESIGN FROM THE AVENGERS!
ANOTHER LANDMARK ISSUE, OFFERING ADDITIONAL PROOF, IF ANY IS STILL NEEDED, THAT A MARVEL MAGAZINE IS TRULY AN INSPIRED EXAMPLE OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE!
A FABULOUS, FAR-OUT FANTASY, FORCEFULLY TOLD AT FEVER-PITCH BY:
STAN LEE - WRITER
DON HECK - ARTIST
FRANK GIACOIA - INKER
SAM ROSEN - LETTERER
AND
IRVING FORBUSH - ARBITRATOR

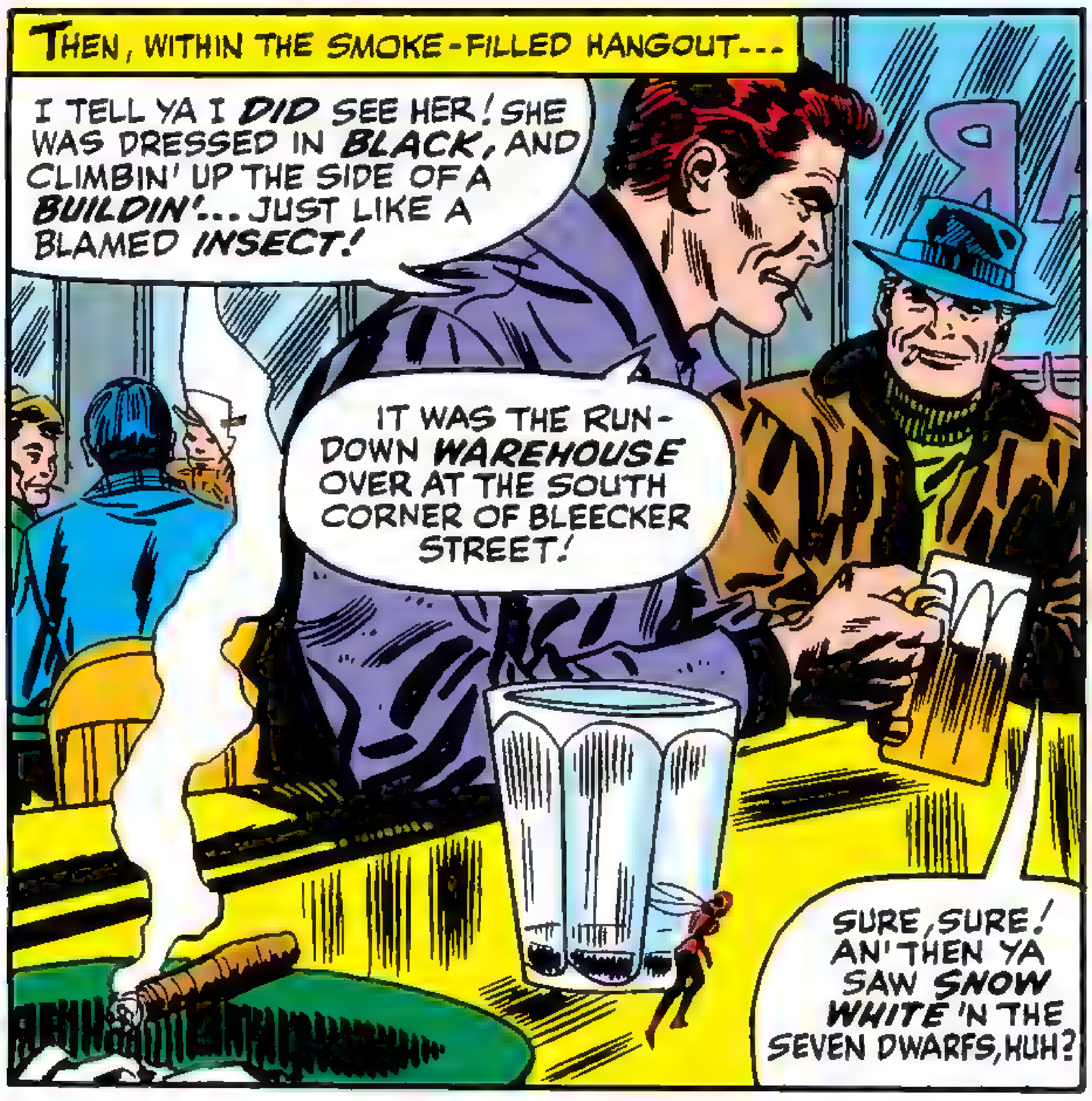

LEAVE THE AVENGERS?!! BUT... WHY??
I'D JUST BE A HANDICAP TO ALL OF YOU! DIDN'T YOU NOTICE HOW LITTLE I HELPED RECENTLY WHEN WE FOUGHT POWER MAN, THE SWORDSMAN, AND THE BLACK-WIDOW?*
*AVENGERS #29... WHAT ELSE?.. LOGICAL STAN.
IT'S MY HEX POWER! IT'S BEEN GRADUALLY GETTING WEAKER... AND NOW... IT'S ALMOST ALL GONE!
THAT'S STRANGE, WANDA! I'VE NOTICED THAT MY SPEED HAS BEEN SLACKENING OFF, TOO!
PERHAPS WE ARE NOT TRUE MUTANTS... AS WE THOUGHT WE WERE!
PERHAPS THERE WAS SOME ELEMENT IN OUR NATIVE LAND THAT GAVE US OUR POWERS! AND NOW, SINCE WE'VE BEEN AWAY FROM HOME FOR SO LONG.. WE'RE LOSING THOSE POWERS!
OH, PIETRO! IF YOU'RE RIGHT, THEN WE COULD REGAIN OUR POWERS... BY RETURNING HOME!
AT ANY RATE, WE MUST TRY IT! WE SHALL RETURN TO EUROPE IMMEDIATELY! I'LL TELL THE OTHER MEMBERS OF.. OH, HERE'S CAP!
NO NEED TO EXPLAIN, PIETRO! I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING!
THEN... YOU UNDERSTAND, STEVE?
OF COURSE, I DO, WANDA!
AND SO WILL THE OTHERS WHEN I TELL THEM ABOUT IT!
YOU HAVE BOTH SERVED LONG AND WELL! LET'S CONSIDER THIS A VACATION, WHICH YOU RICHLY DESERVE!
LUCKILY, GOLIATH HAS RETURNED TO US AGAIN... SO WE'LL HAVE HIS POWER DURING YOUR ABSENCE!
BUT, PERHAPS CAPTAIN AMERICA'S CONFIDENCE IN GOLIATH IS NOT FULLY WARRANTED! FOR, THE NEXT DAY... AFTER QUICKSILVER AND THE SCARLET WITCH HAVE DEPARTED FOR EUROPE...
HANK, DARLING! YOU'VE BEEN CLOSETED IN THERE ALL DAY! YOU HAVEN'T EVEN EATEN!
GO AWAY, JAN! I'M NOT HUNGRY!
BUT YOU MUST EAT--ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU'RE NOW TEN FEET TALL!
YOU NEED MORE FOOD THAN EVER!
TEN FEET TALL! A LIVING FREAK... A VIRTUAL MONSTROSITY... UNABLE TO EVER REDUCE TO MY NORMAL SIZE!
ONCE, I WAS AMONG THE MOST ENVIED OF MEN... ADMIRED... RESPECTED.. AND.. LOVED... BY JAN!
BUT NOW... I'M NOTHING MORE THAN A GROTESQUE OBJECT OF PITY! WHEREAS I USED TO CHERISH THE LOVE OF JANET VAN DYNE... I CANNOT BEAR HER SYMPATHY!
HANK.. MY DEAREST.. WHY WON'T YOU OPEN THE DOOR? WHY WON'T YOU ANSWER ME? I.. I LOVE YOU, HANK! I WANT TO SHARE YOUR TROUBLES..!
OH, JAN.. JAN! I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO LET YOU BURDEN YOURSELF WITH ME NOW! I CAN'T STAND SEEING THE SADNESS IN YOUR EYES..!
2

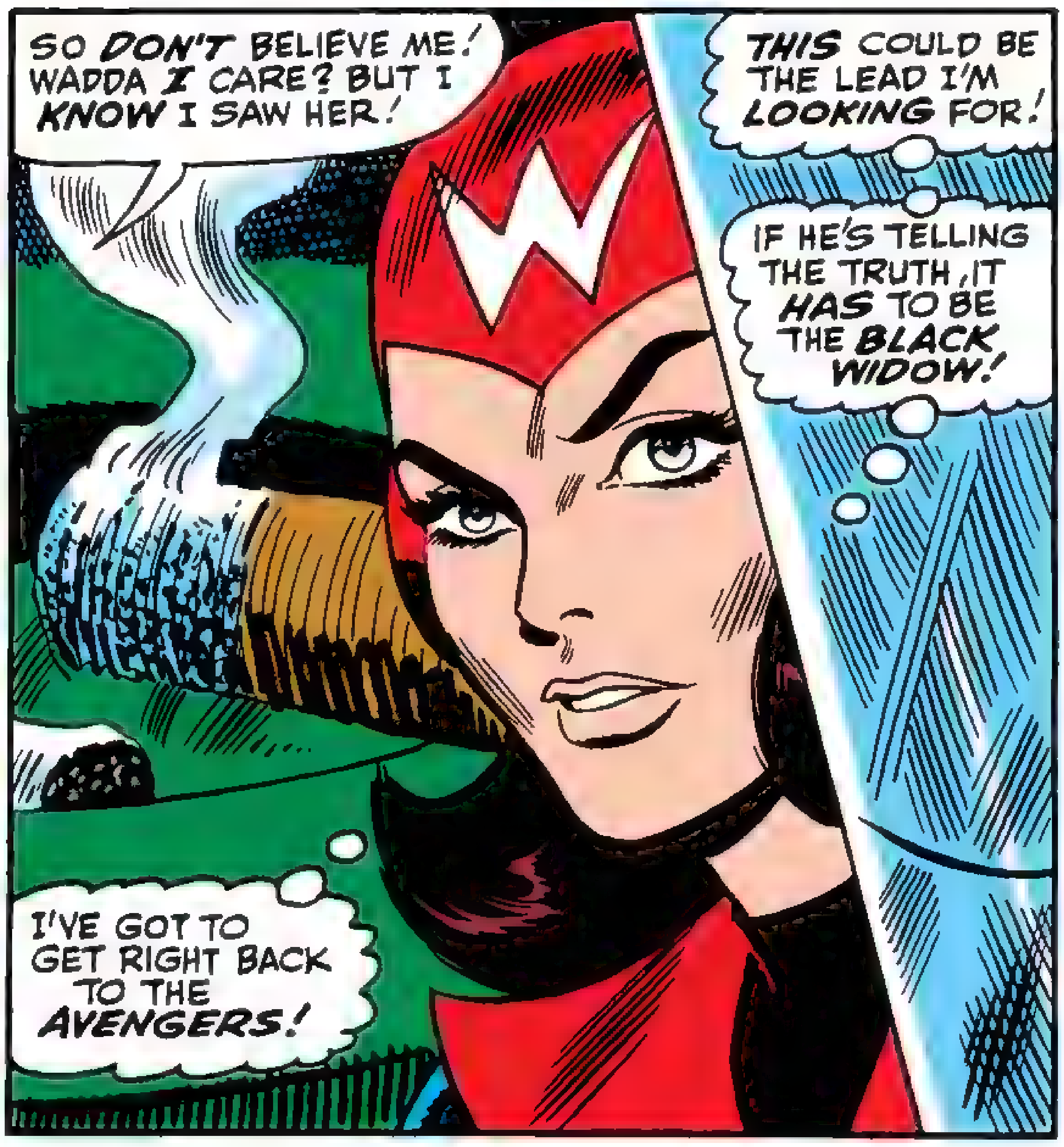

IT'S NO USE! HE'S LOCKED ME OUT OF HIS HEART! BUT...I'LL NEVER STOP LOVING HIM... NEVER...!
SHE'S GONE! NOW I CAN...
BLAST IT! WILL I NEVER REMEMBER NOT TO MOVE TOO SUDDENLY? AT A TEN-FOOT HEIGHT, I'M CONSTANTLY UPSETTING THINGS!
THAK!
NEWS
CKET
HED
BUT THEN, AS THE SCOWLING HENRY PYM RETRIEVES THE FALLEN NEWSPAPER, HE SEES...
WHAT'S THIS? AN ITEM ABOUT MY OLD COLLEGE PROFESSOR... DR. ANTON!
HE'S IN SOUTH AMERICA, DOING RESEARCH ON ARTIFICIAL GROWTH OF BODY CELLS!
IT'S LIKE A STROKE OF FATE! IF ANYBODY CAN HELP ME...IT'S DR. ANTON!
MORNING NEWS
NEW ROCKET TO BE LA
MINUTES LATER, ATOP THE AVENGERS' HQ BUILDING...
THIS IS THE LAST ROCKET-POWERED AIR CAR TONY STARK DESIGNED BEFORE HE LEFT TOWN!
HE CLAIMED IT HAD UNLIMITED RANGE, DUE TO THE FACT THAT ITS OWN SPEED CONSTANTLY RECHARGES THE GENERATORS!
AND, IT'S JUST BIG ENOUGH TO CARRY ME!
IT'S A ONE-IN-A-MILLION CHANCE... BUT IT'S BETTER THAN DOING NOTHING!
ALL I NEED DO IS CONTINUE HEADING DUE SOUTH..!
AND SO, WE TAKE OUR LEAVE OF THE POWERFUL GOLIATH... BUT, NOT FOR LONG, PUSSYCAT!
AND, A SHORT TIME LATER...
I WAS AFRAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN! HANK'S DOOR IS OPEN NOW... BUT HE'S NOWHERE AROUND! HE'S GONE!
WE MUSTN'T MAKE HIM FEEL THAT WE'RE HOUNDING HIM, JAN! I'M SURE HE'LL RETURN.. AS SOON AS HE LEARNS TO ACCEPT HIS HEIGHT!
CAP'S RIGHT, KID! YOU'VE GOTTA LET A MAN WORK THINGS OUT FOR HIMSELF!
BUT, WHAT IF HE'S LEFT US FOR GOOD? WHAT IF HE NEVER RETURNS?!!
3.

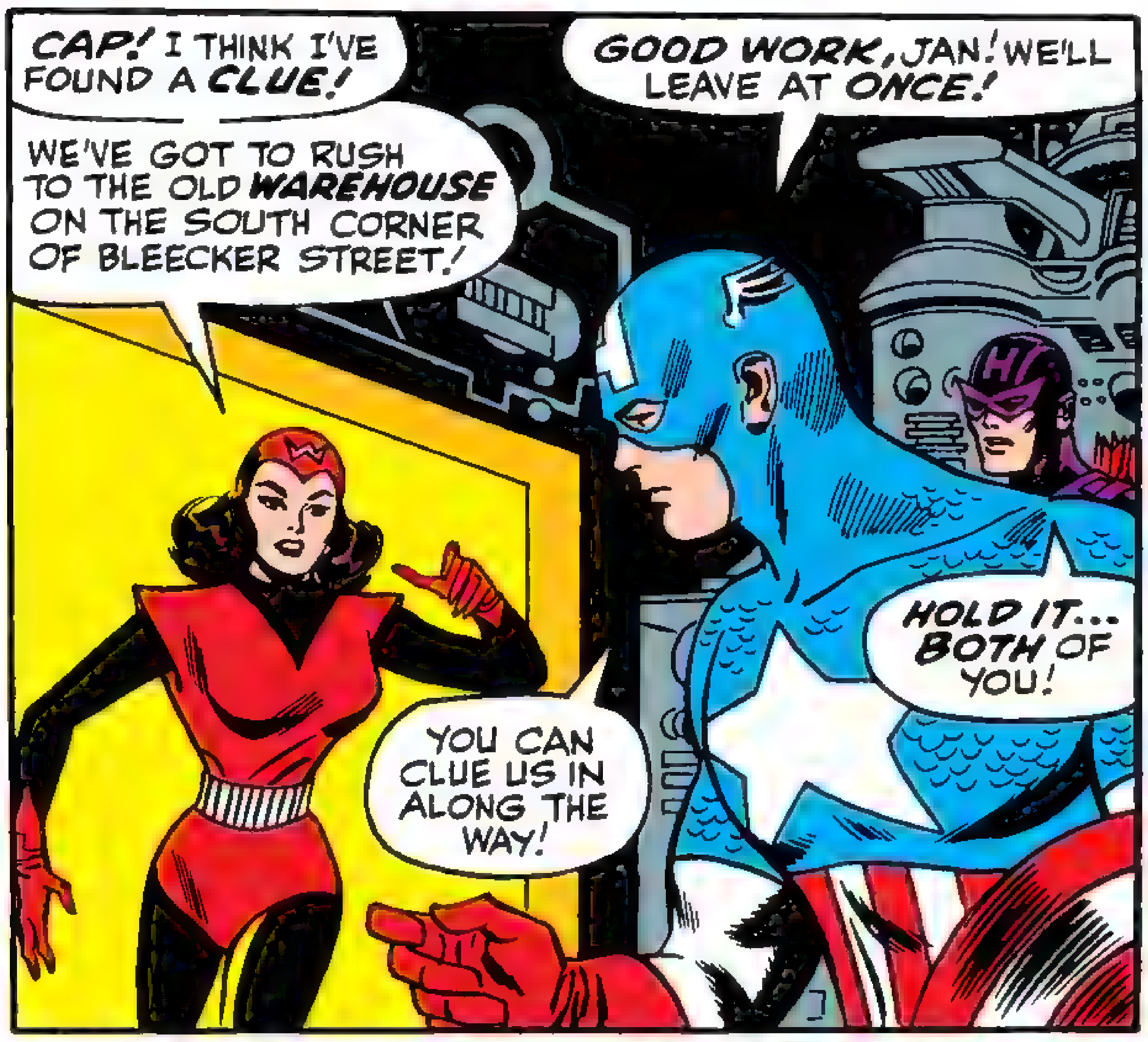

BUT, EVEN AS THE WONDERFUL WASP FEARS THE WORST, ANOTHER DARK-HAIRED BEAUTY CONTACTS HER SUPERIORS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN...
BLACK WIDOW CALLING HU CHEN!
REQUESTING NEW INSTRUCTIONS!
YOUR ORDERS ARE UNCHANGED!
YOU MUST DESTROY THE AVENGERS..BY ANY MEANS AT ALL! DO NOT FAIL!
THEN, AFTER TRANSMISSION HAS BEEN ENDED...
EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON THE DUPED FEMALE DOING HER JOB QUICKLY!
HER BRIEF BRAIN-WASHING MAY NOT LAST MUCH LONGER!
SHE WILL NOT DARE TO FAIL US!
OH NO? WAIT AND SEE!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! I KNOW THE AVENGERS ARE MY ENEMIES... AND HAWKEYE IS AN AVENGER!
YET, I CANNOT GET THE HANDSOME ARCHER OUT OF MY MIND!
I HEAR POWER MAN AND THE SWORDSMAN BEHIND ME!
I NEED THEIR HELP IN ORDER TO DEFEAT THE AVENGERS... AND YET, WHY DO I FEAR AND DISTRUST THEM!?
BEAT IT, SWORDSMAN! I WANNA SPEAK TO THE BLACK WIDOW!
AHH, BUT WHAT IF SHE PREFERS TO SPEAK WITH ME?
SHE IS TOO LOVELY... AND FAR TOO INTELLIGENT, TO PREFER A MUSCLE-BOUND CLOD LIKE YOU TO A MAN OF MY FINESSE!
MUSCLE-BOUND CLOD, AM I? I'VE GOT A GOOD MIND TO SQUASH YOU LIKE THE CRUMMY FLEA YOU ARE!
CORRECTION, YOU BLUSTERING FOOL! YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A MIND... NOR THE SLIGHTEST SEMBLANCE OF SKILL!
ALL RIGHT, SMART GUY... YOU JUST COOKED YOUR OWN GOOSE!
I'M GONNA TAKE YOU APART, AND SEE WHAT MAKES YOU TICK! THEN, IT'LL JUST BE ME AND THE BLACK WIDOW!
THOK!
UNHHH..!
4

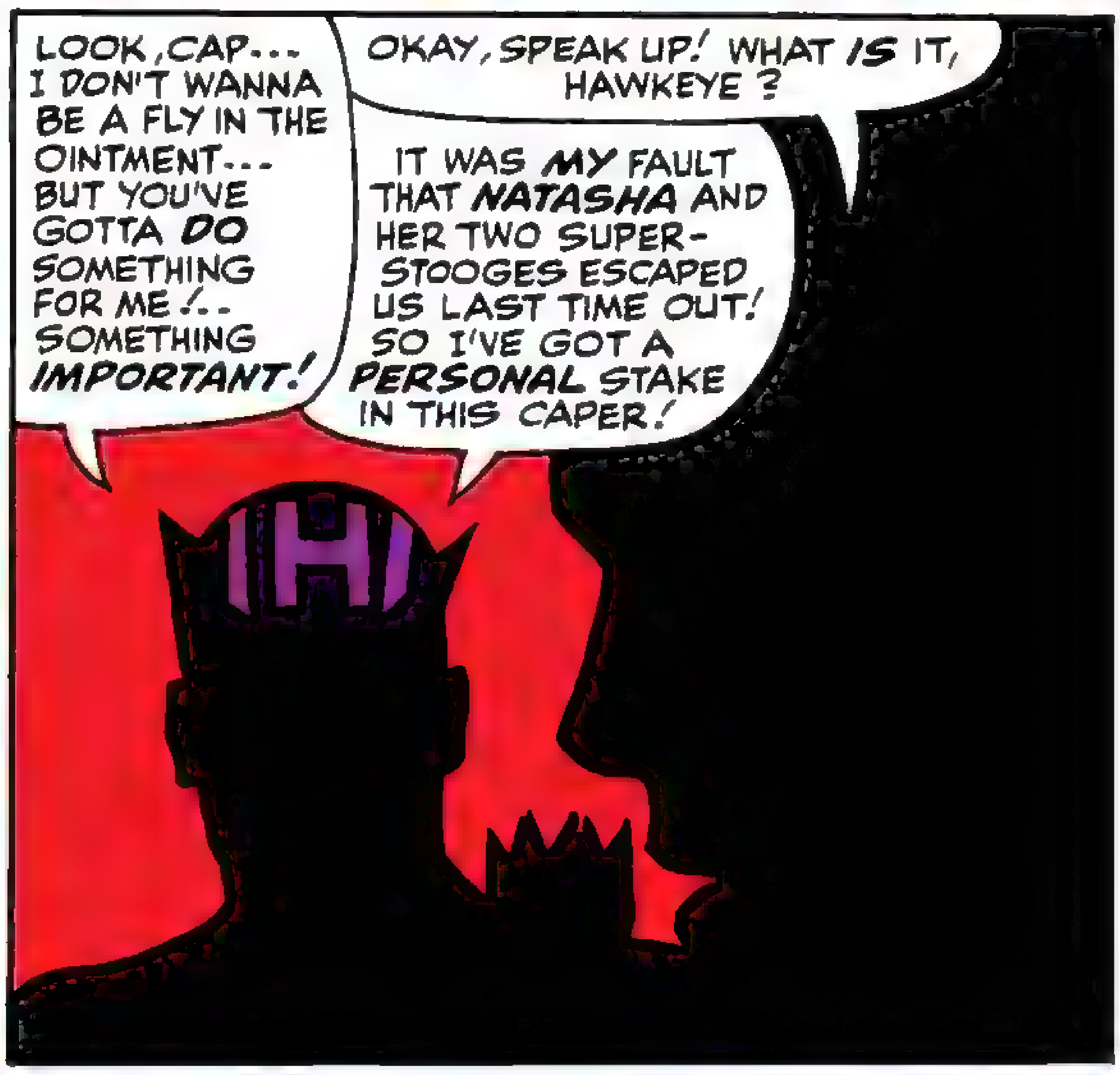

THEY'RE FIGHTING.. OVER ME!
LET THEM FIGHT! THE PRACTICE WILL SERVE IN GOOD STEAD WHEN THEY AGAIN FACE THE AVENGERS!
HE'S RIGHT! EVEN I DON'T DARE FACE THE GLEAMING MENACE OF THAT ACCURSED BLADE!
YOU'RE STRONG, POWER MAN... BUT NOT AS STRONG AS THE FORCE OF MY SWINGING SWORD!
BUT, HE CAN'T KEEP HURLING IT FOREVER! AND, WHEN HE STOPS---I'LL HAVE HIM!
I'LL SHATTER ONE OF THESE HEAVY CRATES AGAINST HIM, AND...
BLAST IT! HE MOVED TOO FAST! I MISSED HIM!
KRAKK!
NOW... HE HAS TO REACH FOR IT... THIS IS MY CHANCE!
I SEE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THAT MY SWORD HAS ITS OWN BUILT-IN POWERS... MORE THAN ENOUGH TO HANDLE YOU!
ZZZAT!
PERHAPS AN ULTRA-SONIC ELECTRIC BOLT, BEAMED YOUR WAY, WILL TAKE SOME OF THE FIGHT OUT OF YOU!
I TOO CAN MOVE FAST... AND YOUR PUNY BOLT IS WASTED AGAINST MY HEAVY WOODEN SHIELD!
FTASH!
BUT NOW, MY STRENGTH WILL FINISH YOU!
HE'S PUNCHING THE FLOOR-BOARD!!... WHY??
THOOMP!

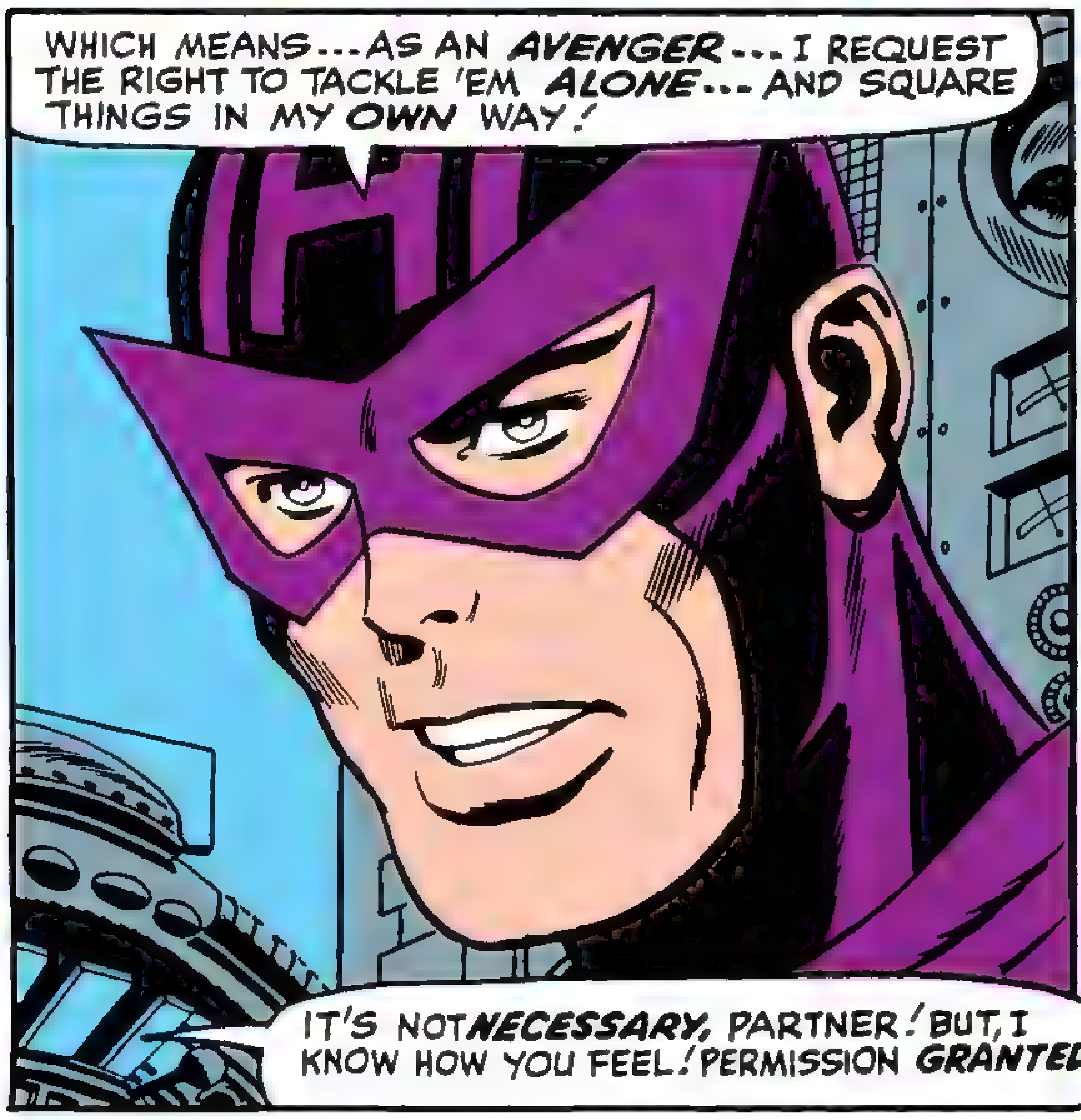

NOW I SEE..! HE SPRUNG IT... KNOCKING ME OFF MY FEET..!
TWANNG!
YOU ONLY GAVE YOURSELF A BRIEF RESPITE, YOU HEAVY-HANDED FOOL!
BAH! YOU JUST SIGNED YOUR OWN DEATH WARRANT! NOTHING WILL SAVE YOU NOW!
STOP IT... BOTH OF YOU! IT'S GONE ON LONG ENOUGH!
IT'S TIME TO PLAN OUR ATTACK... UPON THE AVENGERS!
IT'S A GOOD THING THE BLACK WIDOW REMINDED US... THEY HAD ALMOST SLIPPED OUR MINDS! BUT NOW...
YOU CAN'T SPEND ANY MORE TIME BROODING OVER GOLIATH, JAN! A NEW MISSION IS WHAT YOU NEED... PERHAPS WHAT WE ALL NEED!
THE BLACK WIDOW AND HER TWO COSTUMED HELPMATES ARE SURE TO STRIKE AGAIN...
BUT WE'VE GOT TO BEAT THEM TO THE PUNCH!
THAT SUITS ME FINE!
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, CAP! AND THE ONLY WAY TO DO IT IS TO FIND THEM... WHICH MEANS.. A SEARCH!
SHALL WE USE PLAN S... BY SEPARATING?
PLAN S IT IS! AND SO, A SCANT FEW MINUTES LATER, THE GRIM-LIPPED HAWKEYE TAKES TO THE AIR IN THE AVENGERS' SPEEDY, SILENT, TRANSISTOR-POWERED SCOUT SHIP...
I HOPE I'LL BE THE ONE TO FIND THE FIRST TRACE OF NATASHA, THE SWORDSMAN, OR POWER MAN!
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO MAKE UP FOR THE CRUMMY WAY I'VE TREATED THE OTHERS... ESPECIALLY CAP.. SINCE I JOINED THE TEAM!
AND, CRUISING THE STREETS BELOW...
NOT A SIGN OF THEM ON MY BUILT-IN MONITOR!
I'LL PLAY BACK THE FILM MORE SLOWLY WHEN I RETURN TO HQ..!
WHILE THE WONDERFUL WASP... HAVING MADE HERSELF INSECT-SIZED... BUZZES ABOVE THE VARIOUS UNDERWORLD HAUNTS OF THE SPRAWLING CITY...
THIS IS THE TENTH WATERFRONT SALOON I'VE SCOUTED SO FAR...
IF ONLY I COULD BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO OVERHEAR SOMETHING..!
TOO BAD QUICKSILVER ISN'T WITH US NOW! HE COULD COVER HALF THE COUNTY IN A MATTER OF MINUTES!
6.

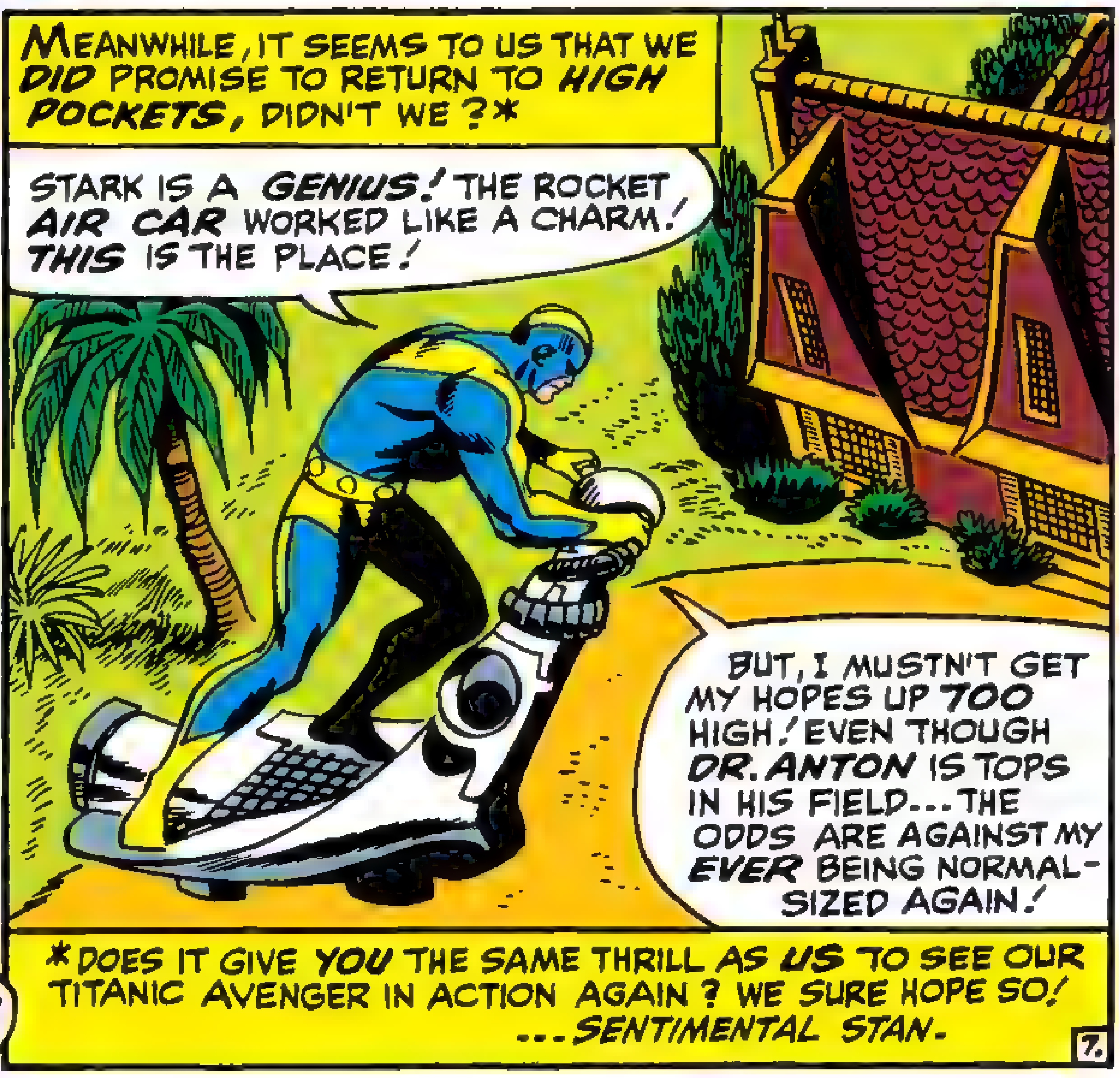

THEN, WITHIN THE SMOKE-FILLED HANGOUT---
I TELL YA I *DID* SEE HER! SHE WAS DRESSED IN *BLACK*, AND CLIMBIN' UP THE SIDE OF A *BUILDIN'*... JUST LIKE A BLAMED *INSECT!*
IT WAS THE RUN-DOWN *WAREHOUSE* OVER AT THE SOUTH CORNER OF BLEECKER STREET!
SURE, SURE! AN' THEN YA SAW *SNOW WHITE* 'N THE SEVEN DWARFS, HUH?


SO *DON'T* BELIEVE ME! WADDA *I* CARE? BUT I *KNOW* I SAW HER!
THIS COULD BE THE LEAD I'M *LOOKING* FOR!
IF HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH, IT *HAS* TO BE THE *BLACK WIDOW!*
I'VE GOT TO GET RIGHT BACK TO THE *AVENGERS!*

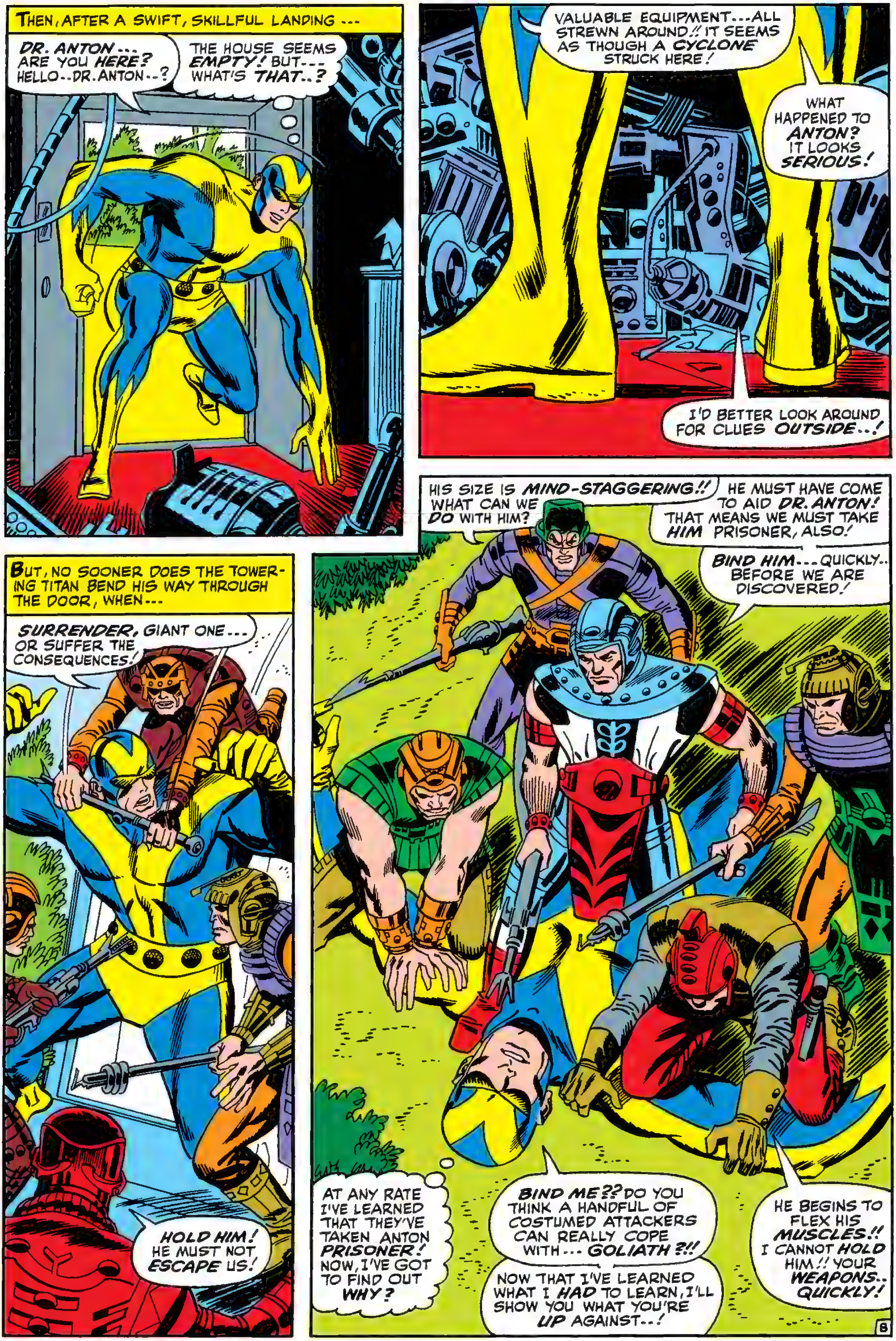

CAP! I THINK I'VE FOUND A *CLUE!*
WE'VE GOT TO RUSH TO THE OLD *WAREHOUSE* ON THE SOUTH CORNER OF BLEECKER STREET!
GOOD WORK, JAN! WE'LL LEAVE AT *ONCE!*
HOLD IT... BOTH OF YOU!
YOU CAN CLUE US IN ALONG THE WAY!

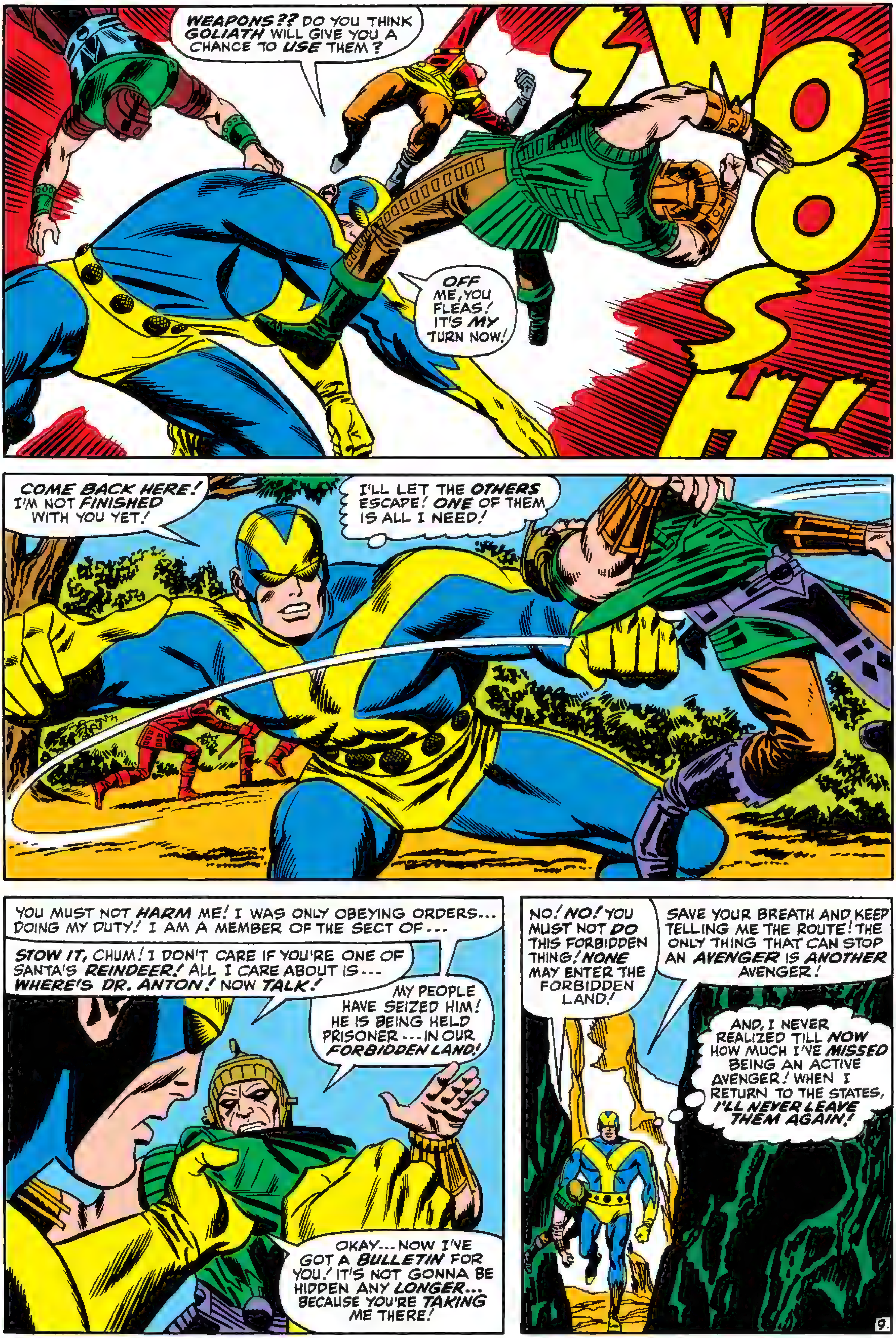

LOOK, CAP... I DON'T WANNA BE A FLY IN THE OINTMENT... BUT YOU'VE GOTTA *DO* SOMETHING FOR ME!.. SOMETHING *IMPORTANT!*
OKAY, SPEAK UP! WHAT *IS* IT, HAWKEYE ?
IT WAS *MY* FAULT THAT *NATASHA* AND HER TWO SUPER-STOOGES ESCAPED US LAST TIME OUT! SO I'VE GOT A *PERSONAL* STAKE IN THIS CAPER!

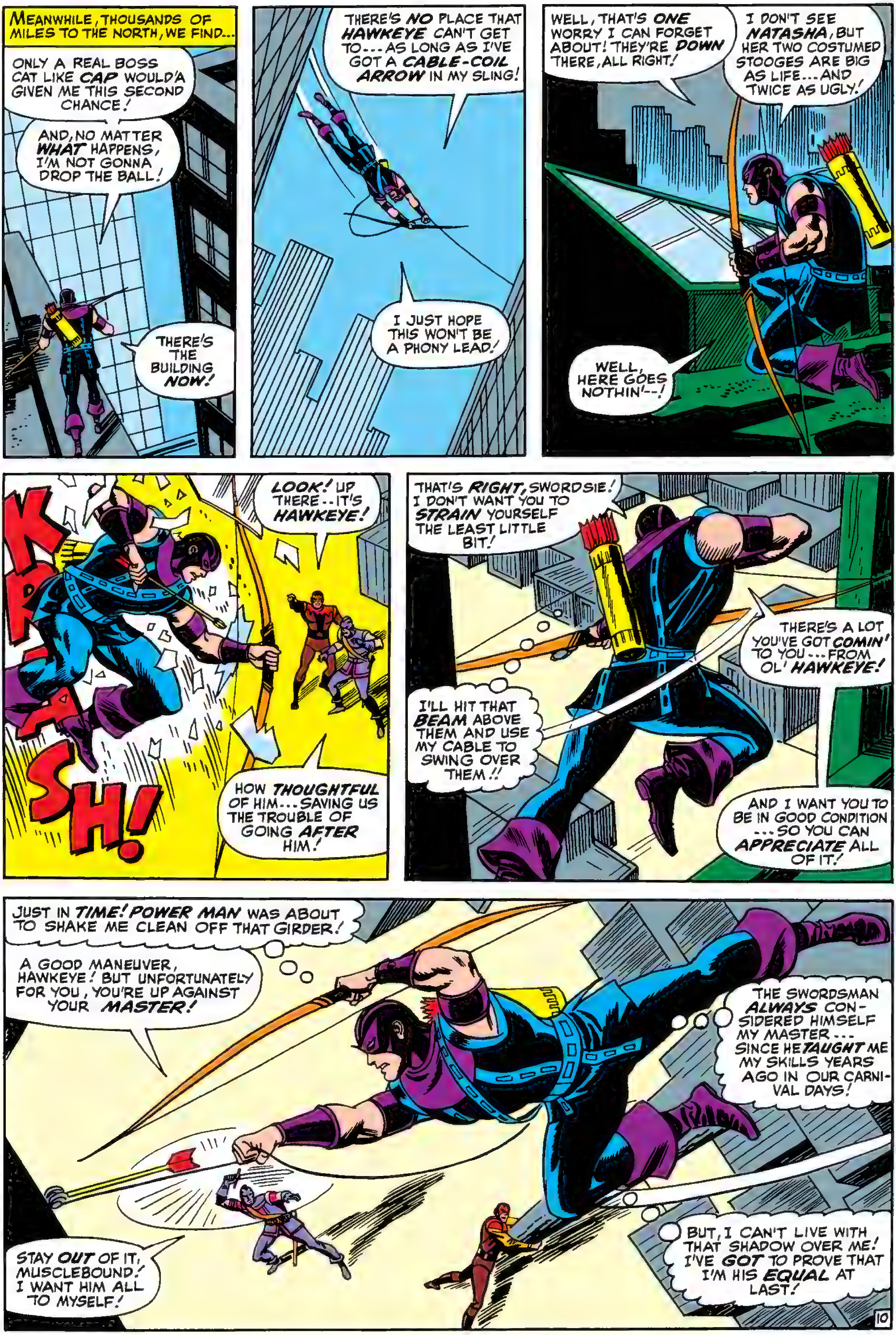

WHICH MEANS... AS AN *AVENGER*... I REQUEST THE RIGHT TO TACKLE 'EM *ALONE*... AND SQUARE THINGS IN MY *OWN* WAY!
IT'S NOT *NECESSARY,* PARTNER! BUT, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL! PERMISSION *GRANTED!*

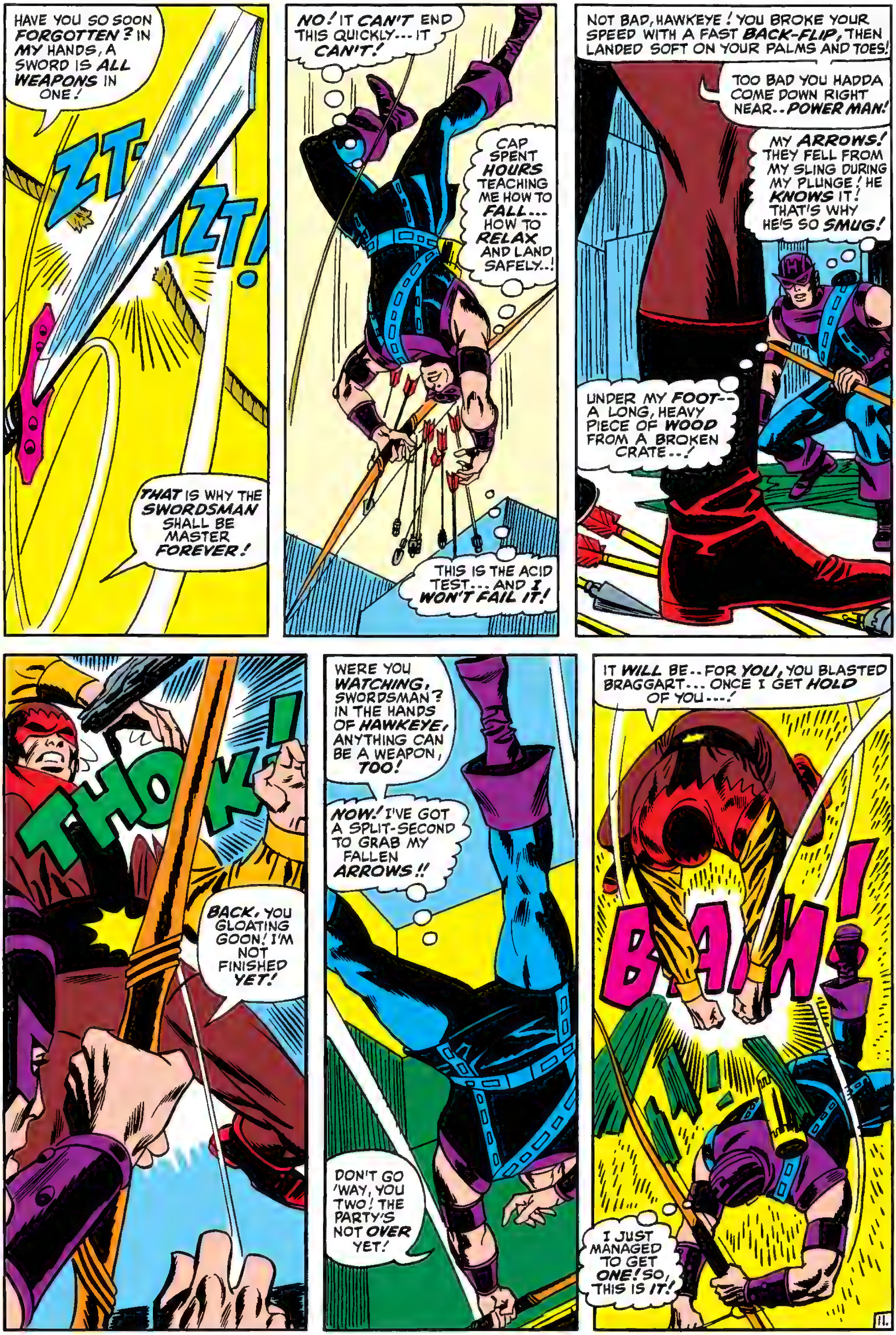

MEANWHILE, IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE *DID* PROMISE TO RETURN TO *HIGH POCKETS*, DIDN'T WE?*
STARK IS A *GENIUS!* THE ROCKET *AIR CAR* WORKED LIKE A CHARM! *THIS* IS THE PLACE!
BUT, I MUSTN'T GET MY HOPES UP *TOO* HIGH! EVEN THOUGH *DR. ANTON* IS TOPS IN HIS FIELD... THE ODDS ARE AGAINST MY *EVER* BEING NORMAL-SIZED AGAIN!

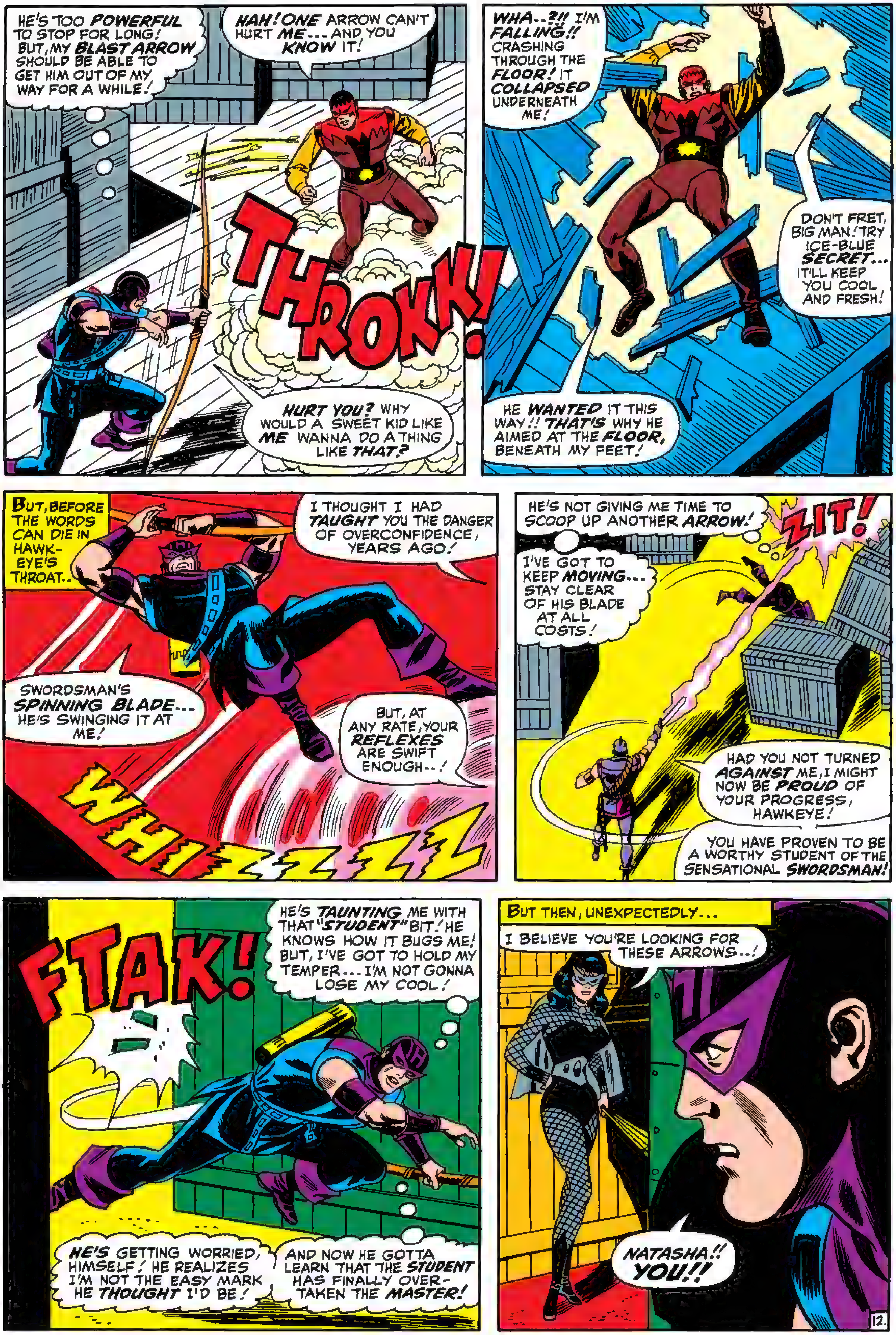
*DOES IT GIVE *YOU* THE SAME THRILL AS *US* TO SEE OUR TITANIC AVENGER IN ACTION AGAIN? WE SURE HOPE SO!
---SENTIMENTAL STAN.

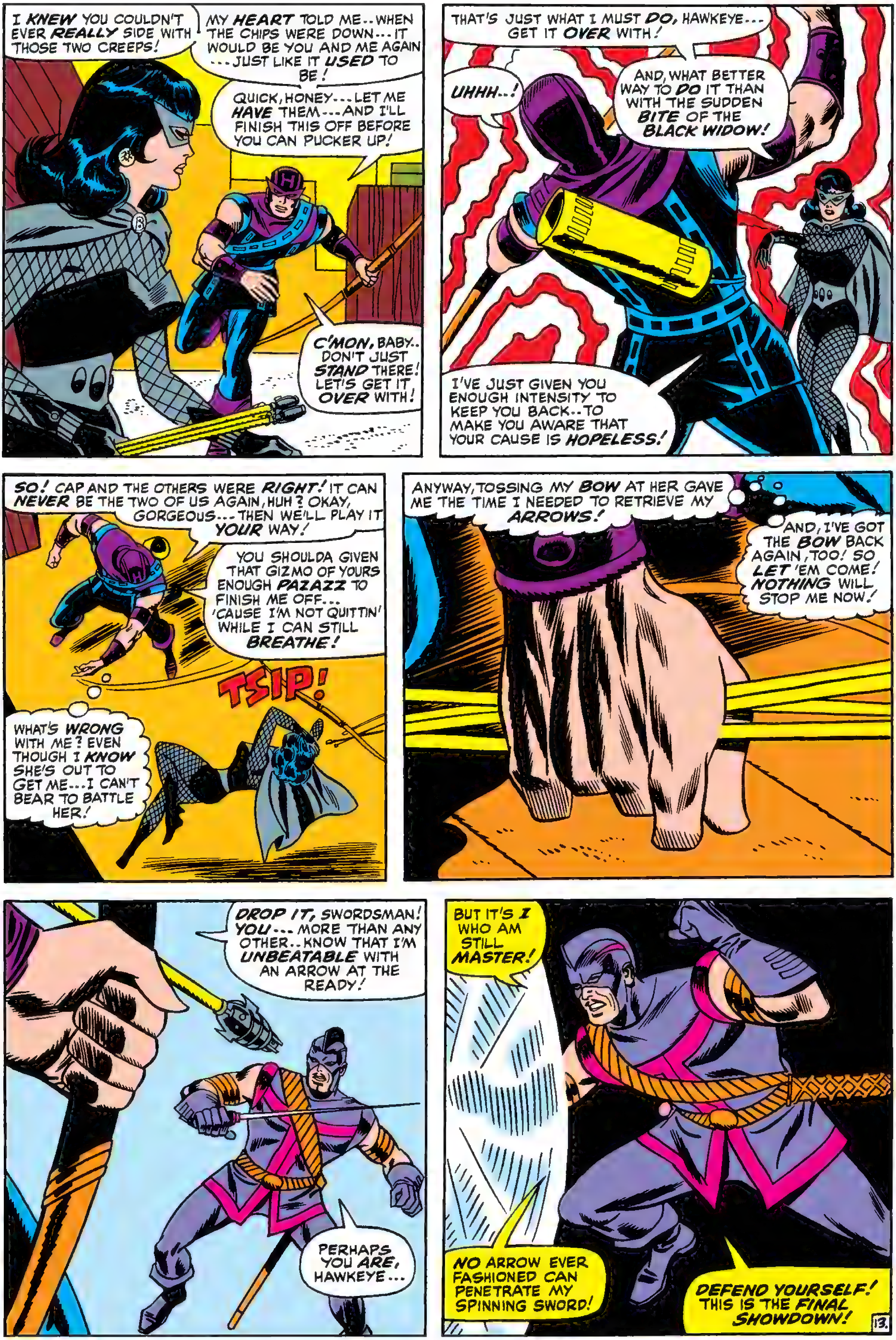

THEN, AFTER A SWIFT, SKILLFUL LANDING ---
DR. ANTON... ARE YOU HERE? HELLO--DR. ANTON--?
THE HOUSE SEEMS EMPTY! BUT--- WHAT'S THAT..?
VALUABLE EQUIPMENT...ALL STREWN AROUND!! IT SEEMS AS THOUGH A CYCLONE STRUCK HERE!
WHAT HAPPENED TO ANTON? IT LOOKS SERIOUS!
I'D BETTER LOOK AROUND FOR CLUES OUTSIDE..!
BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE TOWERING TITAN BEND HIS WAY THROUGH THE DOOR, WHEN---
SURRENDER, GIANT ONE... OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!
HOLD HIM! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE US!
HIS SIZE IS MIND-STAGGERING!! WHAT CAN WE DO WITH HIM?
HE MUST HAVE COME TO AID DR. ANTON! THAT MEANS WE MUST TAKE HIM PRISONER, ALSO!
BIND HIM...QUICKLY.. BEFORE WE ARE DISCOVERED!
AT ANY RATE I'VE LEARNED THAT THEY'VE TAKEN ANTON PRISONER! NOW, I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHY?
BIND ME?? DO YOU THINK A HANDFUL OF COSTUMED ATTACKERS CAN REALLY COPE WITH... GOLIATH?!!
NOW THAT I'VE LEARNED WHAT I HAD TO LEARN, I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST..!
HE BEGINS TO FLEX HIS MUSCLES!! I CANNOT HOLD HIM!! YOUR WEAPONS.. QUICKLY!

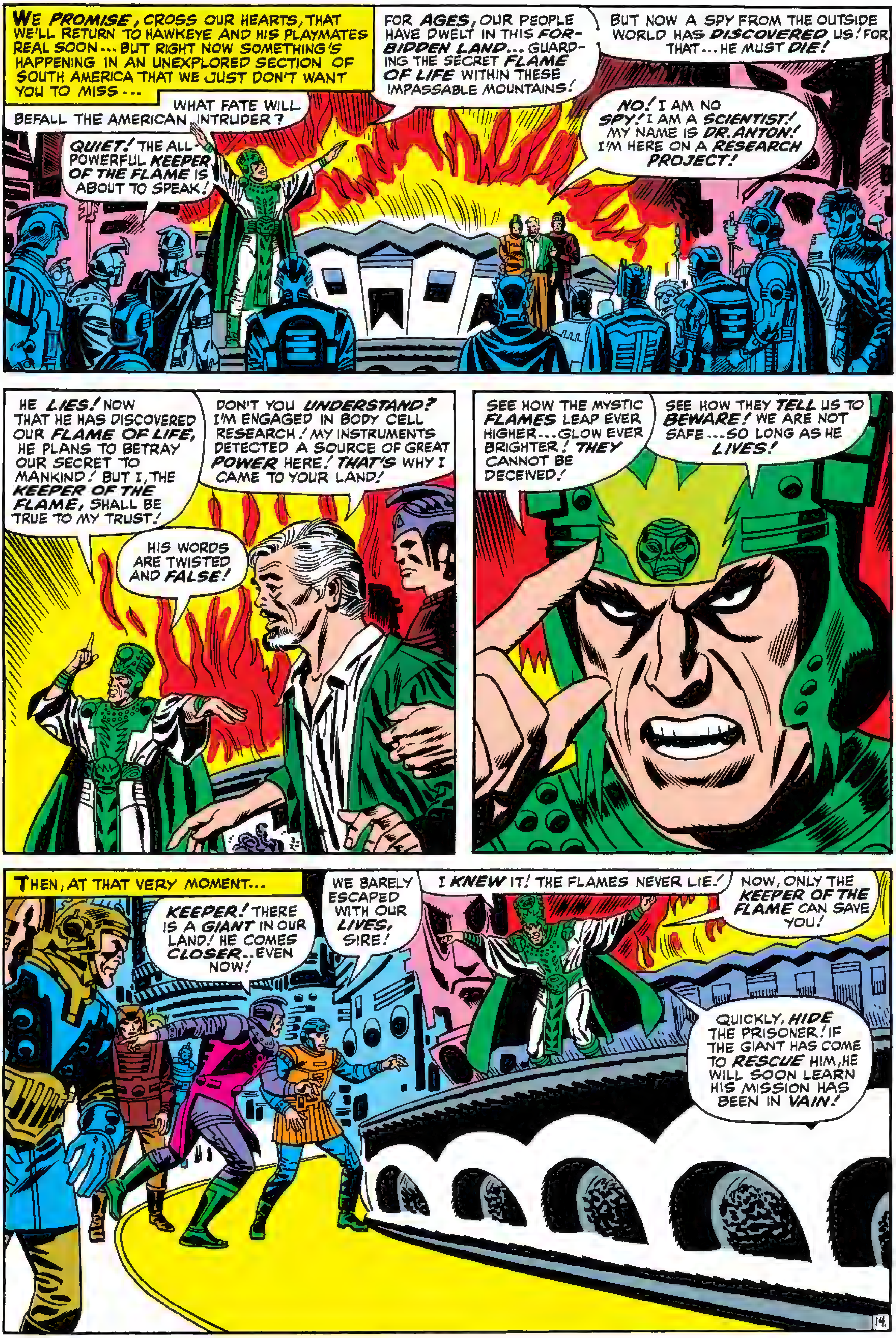

WEAPONS?? DO YOU THINK GOLIATH WILL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO USE THEM?
SWOOSH!
OFF ME, YOU FLEAS! IT'S MY TURN NOW!
COME BACK HERE! I'M NOT FINISHED WITH YOU YET!
I'LL LET THE OTHERS ESCAPE! ONE OF THEM IS ALL I NEED!
YOU MUST NOT HARM ME! I WAS ONLY OBEYING ORDERS... DOING MY DUTY! I AM A MEMBER OF THE SECT OF...
STOW IT, CHUM! I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE ONE OF SANTA'S REINDEER! ALL I CARE ABOUT IS... WHERE'S DR. ANTON! NOW TALK!
MY PEOPLE HAVE SEIZED HIM! HE IS BEING HELD PRISONER---IN OUR FORBIDDEN LAND!
OKAY... NOW I'VE GOT A BULLETIN FOR YOU! IT'S NOT GONNA BE HIDDEN ANY LONGER... BECAUSE YOU'RE TAKING ME THERE!
NO! NO! YOU MUST NOT DO THIS FORBIDDEN THING! NONE MAY ENTER THE FORBIDDEN LAND!
SAVE YOUR BREATH AND KEEP TELLING ME THE ROUTE! THE ONLY THING THAT CAN STOP AN AVENGER IS ANOTHER AVENGER!
AND, I NEVER REALIZED TILL NOW HOW MUCH I'VE MISSED BEING AN ACTIVE AVENGER! WHEN I RETURN TO THE STATES, I'LL NEVER LEAVE THEM AGAIN!

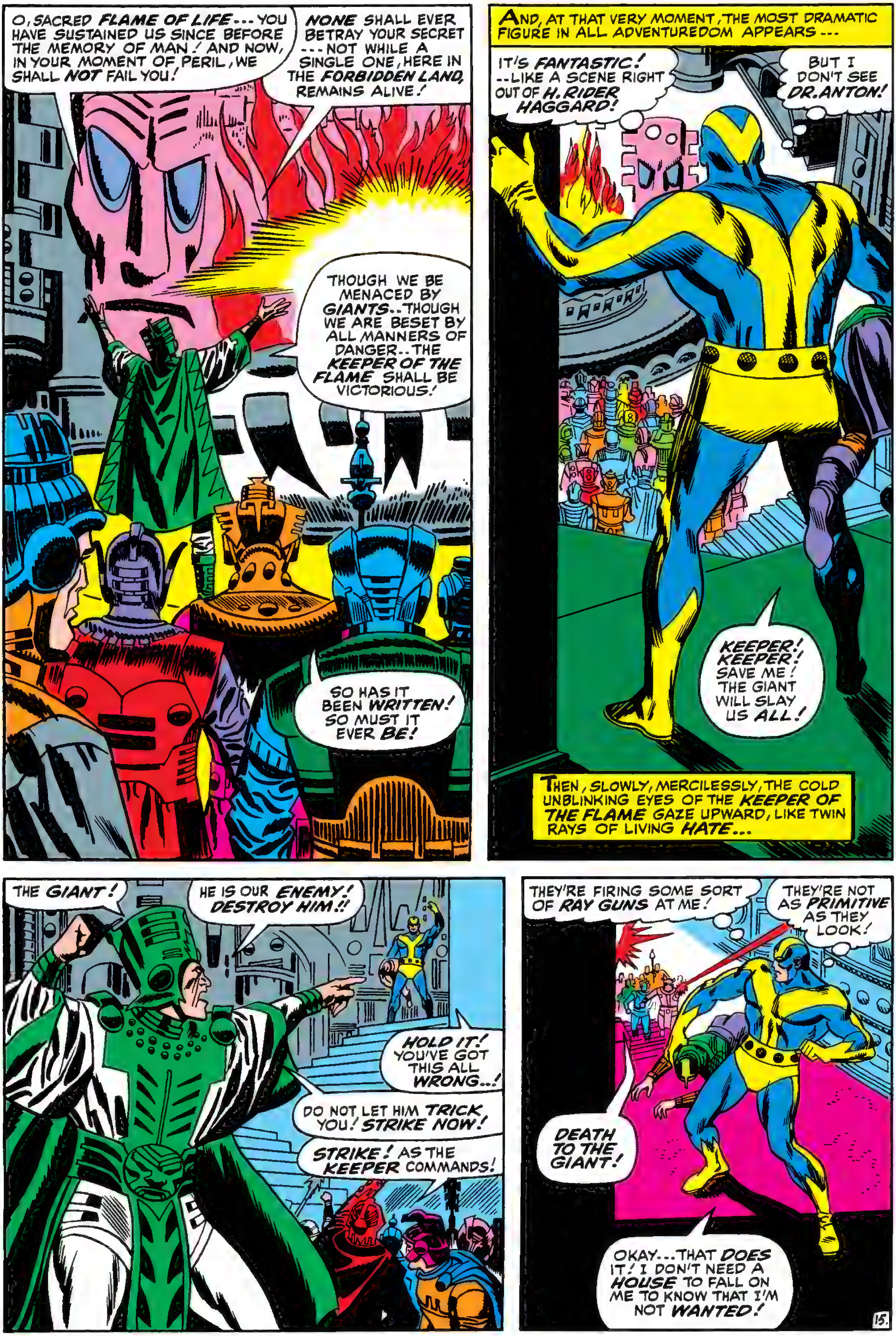

MEANWHILE, THOUSANDS OF MILES TO THE NORTH, WE FIND...
ONLY A REAL BOSS CAT LIKE CAP WOULD'A GIVEN ME THIS SECOND CHANCE!
AND, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I'M NOT GONNA DROP THE BALL!
THERE'S THE BUILDING NOW!
THERE'S NO PLACE THAT HAWKEYE CAN'T GET TO--- AS LONG AS I'VE GOT A CABLE-COIL ARROW IN MY SLING!
I JUST HOPE THIS WON'T BE A PHONY LEAD!
WELL, THAT'S ONE WORRY I CAN FORGET ABOUT! THEY'RE DOWN THERE, ALL RIGHT!
I DON'T SEE NATASHA, BUT HER TWO COSTUMED STOOGES ARE BIG AS LIFE... AND TWICE AS UGLY!
WELL, HERE GOES NOTHIN'--!
KRAASH!
LOOK! UP THERE--IT'S HAWKEYE!
HOW THOUGHTFUL OF HIM... SAVING US THE TROUBLE OF GOING AFTER HIM!
THAT'S RIGHT, SWORDSIE! I DON'T WANT YOU TO STRAIN YOURSELF THE LEAST LITTLE BIT!
THERE'S A LOT YOU'VE GOT COMIN' TO YOU... FROM OL' HAWKEYE!
I'LL HIT THAT BEAM ABOVE THEM AND USE MY CABLE TO SWING OVER THEM!!
AND I WANT YOU TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION ... SO YOU CAN APPRECIATE ALL OF IT!
JUST IN TIME! POWER MAN WAS ABOUT TO SHAKE ME CLEAN OFF THAT GIRDER!
A GOOD MANEUVER, HAWKEYE! BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, YOU'RE UP AGAINST YOUR MASTER!
THE SWORDSMAN ALWAYS CONSIDERED HIMSELF MY MASTER... SINCE HE TAUGHT ME MY SKILLS YEARS AGO IN OUR CARNIVAL DAYS!
STAY OUT OF IT, MUSCLEBOUND! I WANT HIM ALL TO MYSELF!
BUT, I CAN'T LIVE WITH THAT SHADOW OVER ME! I'VE GOT TO PROVE THAT I'M HIS EQUAL AT LAST!

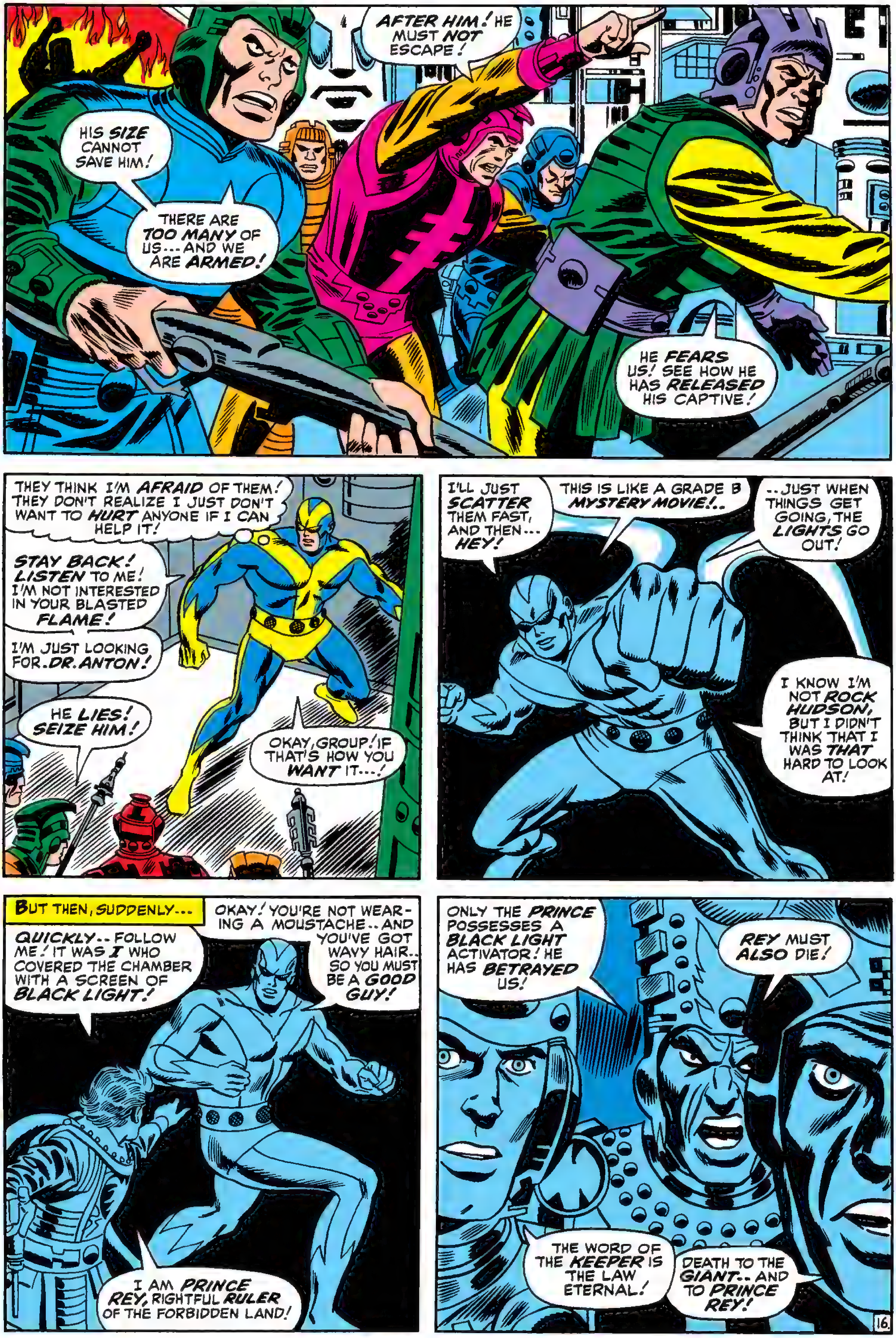

HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN? IN MY HANDS, A SWORD IS ALL WEAPONS IN ONE!
ZT-ZZT!
THAT IS WHY THE SWORDSMAN SHALL BE MASTER FOREVER!
NO! IT CAN'T END THIS QUICKLY--- IT CAN'T!
CAP SPENT HOURS TEACHING ME HOW TO FALL... HOW TO RELAX AND LAND SAFELY..!
THIS IS THE ACID TEST... AND I WON'T FAIL IT!
NOT BAD, HAWKEYE! YOU BROKE YOUR SPEED WITH A FAST BACK-FLIP, THEN LANDED SOFT ON YOUR PALMS AND TOES!
TOO BAD YOU HADDA COME DOWN RIGHT NEAR..POWER MAN!
MY ARROWS! THEY FELL FROM MY SLING DURING MY PLUNGE! HE KNOWS IT! THAT'S WHY HE'S SO SMUG!
UNDER MY FOOT-- A LONG, HEAVY PIECE OF WOOD FROM A BROKEN CRATE--!
THOK!
BACK, YOU GLOATING GOON! I'M NOT FINISHED YET!
WERE YOU WATCHING, SWORDSMAN? IN THE HANDS OF HAWKEYE, ANYTHING CAN BE A WEAPON, TOO!
NOW! I'VE GOT A SPLIT-SECOND TO GRAB MY FALLEN ARROWS!!
DON'T GO 'WAY, YOU TWO! THE PARTY'S NOT OVER YET!
IT WILL BE..FOR YOU, YOU BLASTED BRAGGART... ONCE I GET HOLD OF YOU---!
BAM!
I JUST MANAGED TO GET ONE! SO, THIS IS IT!

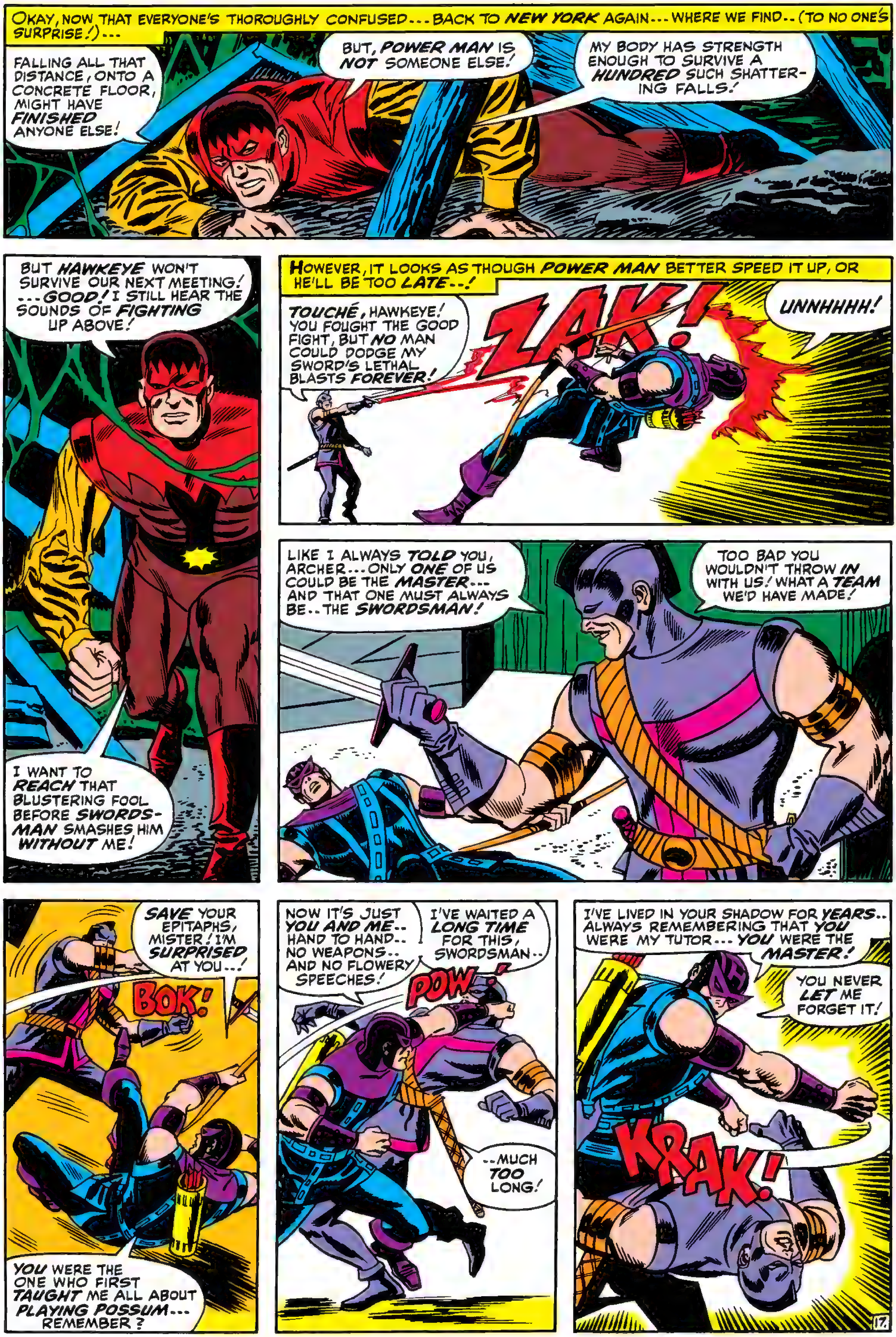

HE'S TOO POWERFUL TO STOP FOR LONG! BUT, MY BLAST ARROW SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET HIM OUT OF MY WAY FOR A WHILE!
HAH! ONE ARROW CAN'T HURT ME... AND YOU KNOW IT!
THROKK!
HURT YOU? WHY WOULD A SWEET KID LIKE ME WANNA DO A THING LIKE THAT?
WHA..?!! I'M FALLING!! CRASHING THROUGH THE FLOOR! IT COLLAPSED UNDERNEATH ME!
DON'T FRET, BIG MAN! TRY ICE-BLUE SECRET... IT'LL KEEP YOU COOL AND FRESH!
HE WANTED IT THIS WAY!! THAT'S WHY HE AIMED AT THE FLOOR, BENEATH MY FEET!
BUT, BEFORE THE WORDS CAN DIE IN HAWKEYE'S THROAT...
I THOUGHT I HAD TAUGHT YOU THE DANGER OF OVERCONFIDENCE, YEARS AGO!
SWORDSMAN'S SPINNING BLADE... HE'S SWINGING IT AT ME!
BUT, AT ANY RATE, YOUR REFLEXES ARE SWIFT ENOUGH--!
WHIZZZZZ
HE'S NOT GIVING ME TIME TO SCOOP UP ANOTHER ARROW!
ZIT!
I'VE GOT TO KEEP MOVING... STAY CLEAR OF HIS BLADE AT ALL COSTS!
HAD YOU NOT TURNED AGAINST ME, I MIGHT NOW BE PROUD OF YOUR PROGRESS, HAWKEYE!
YOU HAVE PROVEN TO BE A WORTHY STUDENT OF THE SENSATIONAL SWORDSMAN!
FTAK!
HE'S TAUNTING ME WITH THAT "STUDENT" BIT! HE KNOWS HOW IT BUGS ME! BUT, I'VE GOT TO HOLD MY TEMPER... I'M NOT GONNA LOSE MY COOL!
HE'S GETTING WORRIED, HIMSELF! HE REALIZES I'M NOT THE EASY MARK HE THOUGHT I'D BE!
AND NOW HE GOTTA LEARN THAT THE STUDENT HAS FINALLY OVERTAKEN THE MASTER!
BUT THEN, UNEXPECTEDLY...
I BELIEVE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THESE ARROWS..!
NATASHA!! YOU!!

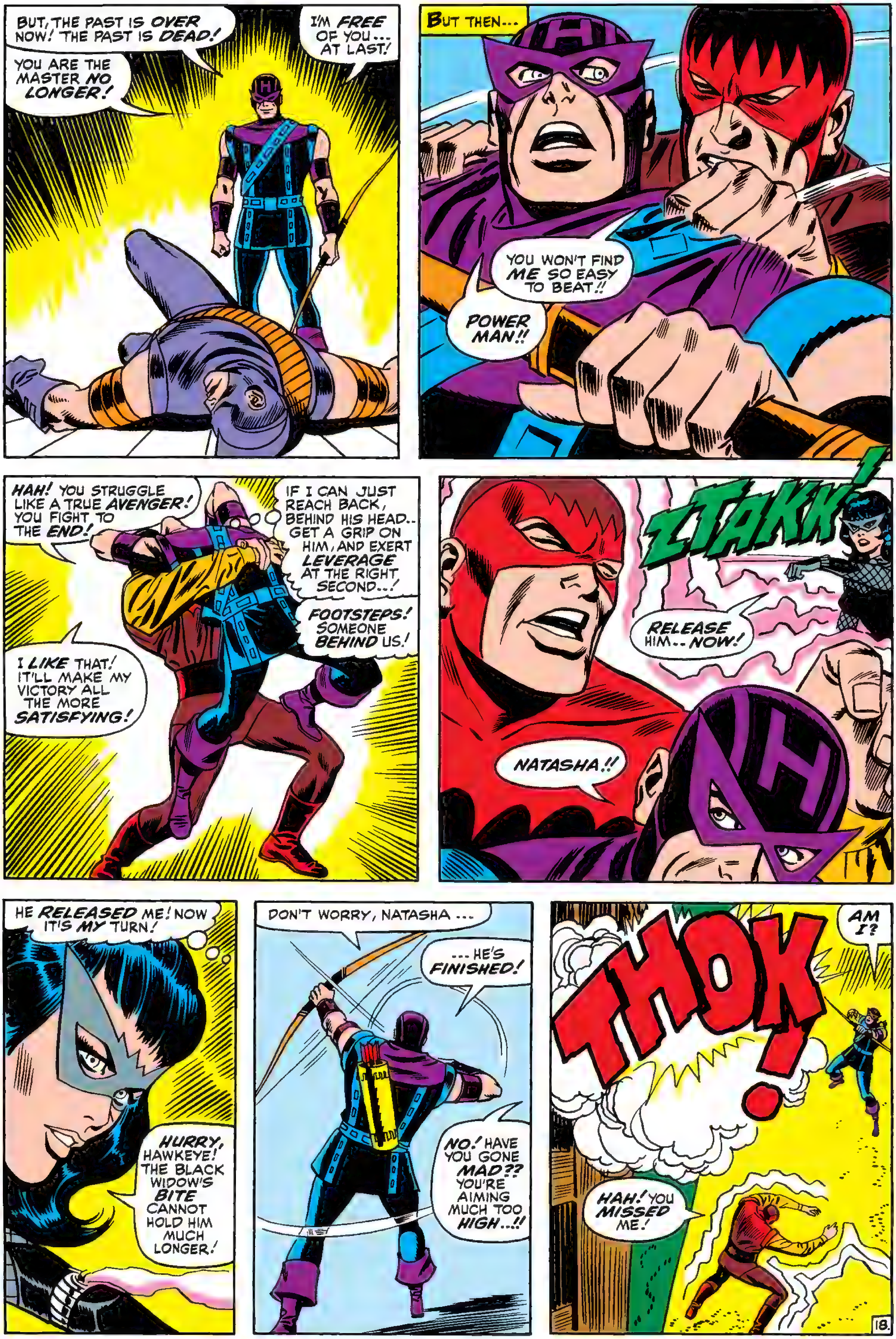

I KNEW YOU COULDN'T EVER REALLY SIDE WITH THOSE TWO CREEPS!
MY HEART TOLD ME..WHEN THE CHIPS WERE DOWN...IT WOULD BE YOU AND ME AGAIN ...JUST LIKE IT USED TO BE!
QUICK, HONEY...LET ME HAVE THEM...AND I'LL FINISH THIS OFF BEFORE YOU CAN PUCKER UP!
C'MON, BABY.. DON'T JUST STAND THERE! LET'S GET IT OVER WITH!
THAT'S JUST WHAT I MUST DO, HAWKEYE... GET IT OVER WITH!
UHHH..!
AND, WHAT BETTER WAY TO DO IT THAN WITH THE SUDDEN BITE OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
I'VE JUST GIVEN YOU ENOUGH INTENSITY TO KEEP YOU BACK..TO MAKE YOU AWARE THAT YOUR CAUSE IS HOPELESS!
SO! CAP AND THE OTHERS WERE RIGHT! IT CAN NEVER BE THE TWO OF US AGAIN, HUH? OKAY, GORGEOUS...THEN WE'LL PLAY IT YOUR WAY!
YOU SHOULDA GIVEN THAT GIZMO OF YOURS ENOUGH PAZAZZ TO FINISH ME OFF... 'CAUSE I'M NOT QUITTIN' WHILE I CAN STILL BREATHE!
TSIP!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? EVEN THOUGH I KNOW SHE'S OUT TO GET ME...I CAN'T BEAR TO BATTLE HER!
ANYWAY, TOSSING MY BOW AT HER GAVE ME THE TIME I NEEDED TO RETRIEVE MY ARROWS!
AND, I'VE GOT THE BOW BACK AGAIN, TOO! SO LET 'EM COME! NOTHING WILL STOP ME NOW!
DROP IT, SWORDSMAN! YOU... MORE THAN ANY OTHER..KNOW THAT I'M UNBEATABLE WITH AN ARROW AT THE READY!
PERHAPS YOU ARE, HAWKEYE...
BUT IT'S I WHO AM STILL MASTER!
NO ARROW EVER FASHIONED CAN PENETRATE MY SPINNING SWORD!
DEFEND YOURSELF! THIS IS THE FINAL SHOWDOWN!

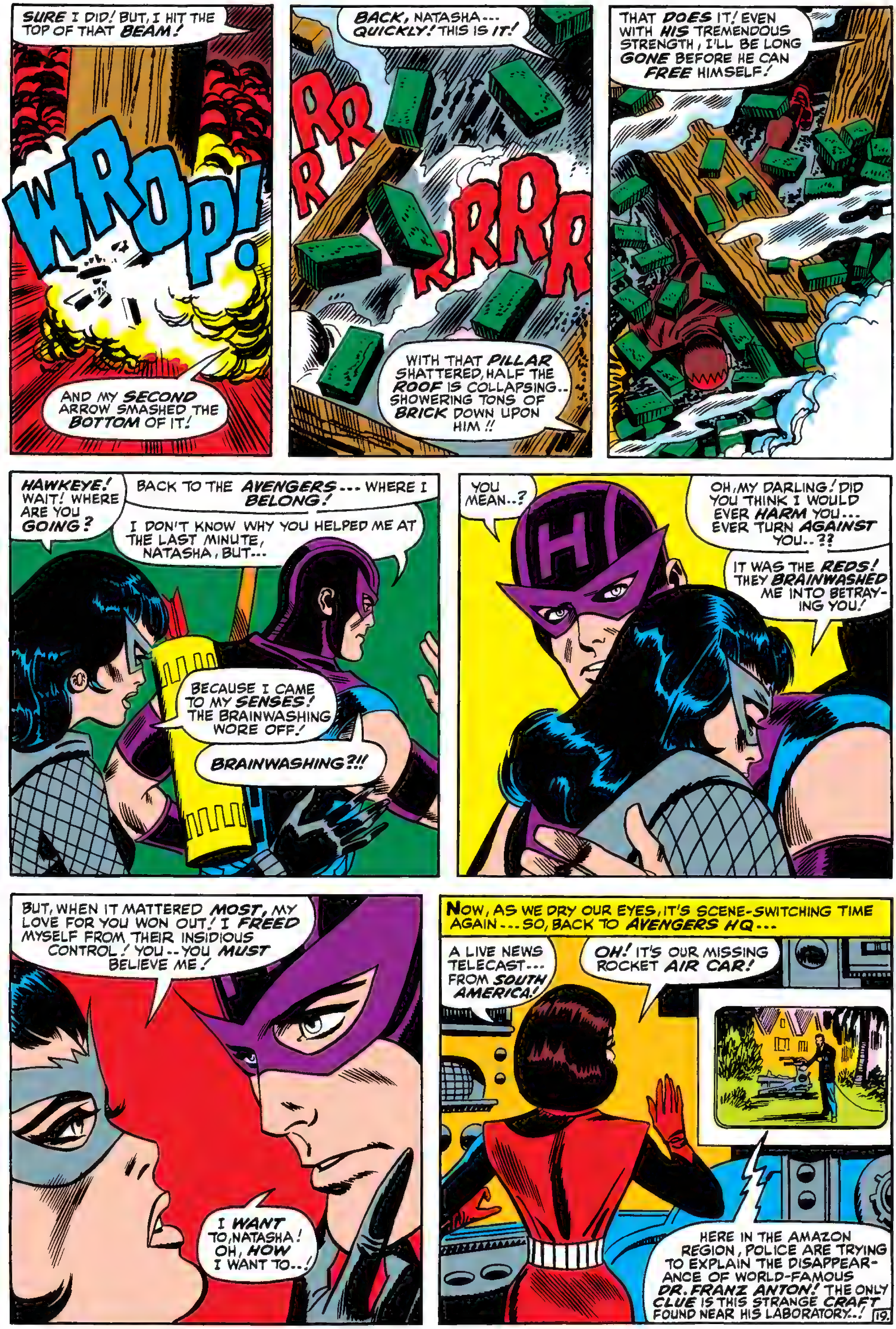

WE PROMISE, CROSS OUR HEARTS, THAT WE'LL RETURN TO HAWKEYE AND HIS PLAYMATES REAL SOON... BUT RIGHT NOW SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN AN UNEXPLORED SECTION OF SOUTH AMERICA THAT WE JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO MISS...
WHAT FATE WILL BEFALL THE AMERICAN INTRUDER?
QUIET! THE ALL-POWERFUL KEEPER OF THE FLAME IS ABOUT TO SPEAK!
FOR AGES, OUR PEOPLE HAVE DWELT IN THIS FORBIDDEN LAND... GUARDING THE SECRET FLAME OF LIFE WITHIN THESE IMPASSABLE MOUNTAINS!
BUT NOW A SPY FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAS DISCOVERED US! FOR THAT... HE MUST DIE!
NO! I AM NO SPY! I AM A SCIENTIST! MY NAME IS DR. ANTON! I'M HERE ON A RESEARCH PROJECT!
HE LIES! NOW THAT HE HAS DISCOVERED OUR FLAME OF LIFE, HE PLANS TO BETRAY OUR SECRET TO MANKIND! BUT I, THE KEEPER OF THE FLAME, SHALL BE TRUE TO MY TRUST!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I'M ENGAGED IN BODY CELL RESEARCH! MY INSTRUMENTS DETECTED A SOURCE OF GREAT POWER HERE! THAT'S WHY I CAME TO YOUR LAND!
HIS WORDS ARE TWISTED AND FALSE!
SEE HOW THE MYSTIC FLAMES LEAP EVER HIGHER... GLOW EVER BRIGHTER! THEY CANNOT BE DECEIVED!
SEE HOW THEY TELL US TO BEWARE! WE ARE NOT SAFE... SO LONG AS HE LIVES!
THEN, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
KEEPER! THERE IS A GIANT IN OUR LAND! HE COMES CLOSER.. EVEN NOW!
WE BARELY ESCAPED WITH OUR LIVES, SIRE!
I KNEW IT! THE FLAMES NEVER LIE!
NOW, ONLY THE KEEPER OF THE FLAME CAN SAVE YOU!
QUICKLY, HIDE THE PRISONER! IF THE GIANT HAS COME TO RESCUE HIM, HE WILL SOON LEARN HIS MISSION HAS BEEN IN VAIN!

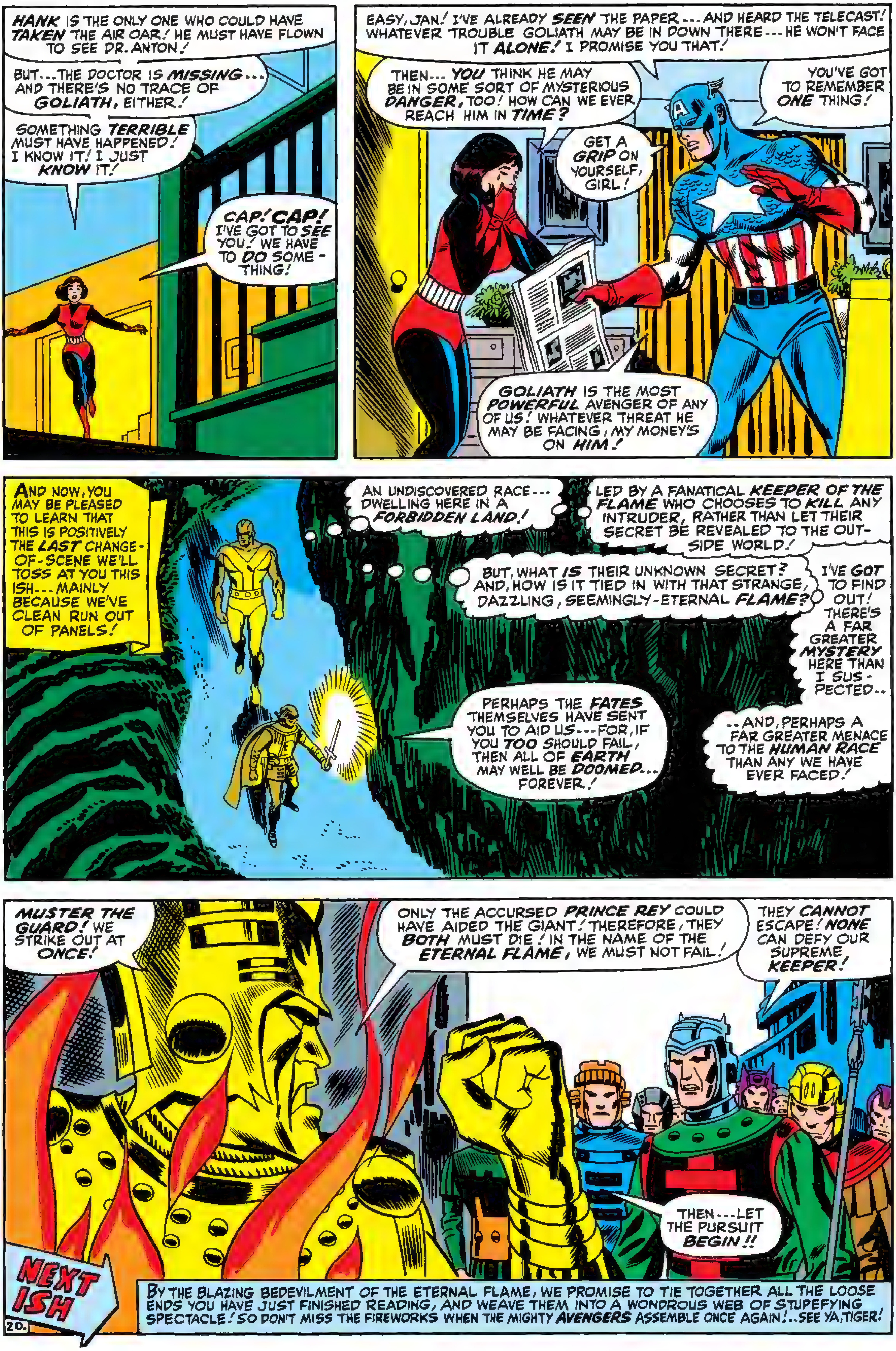

O, SACRED FLAME OF LIFE... YOU HAVE SUSTAINED US SINCE BEFORE THE MEMORY OF MAN! AND NOW, IN YOUR MOMENT OF PERIL, WE SHALL NOT FAIL YOU!
NONE SHALL EVER BETRAY YOUR SECRET ... NOT WHILE A SINGLE ONE, HERE IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND, REMAINS ALIVE!
THOUGH WE BE MENACED BY GIANTS.. THOUGH WE ARE BESET BY ALL MANNERS OF DANGER.. THE KEEPER OF THE FLAME SHALL BE VICTORIOUS!
SO HAS IT BEEN WRITTEN! SO MUST IT EVER BE!
AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE MOST DRAMATIC FIGURE IN ALL ADVENTUREDOM APPEARS ...
IT'S FANTASTIC! --LIKE A SCENE RIGHT OUT OF H. RIDER HAGGARD!
BUT I DON'T SEE DR. ANTON!
KEEPER! KEEPER! SAVE ME! THE GIANT WILL SLAY US ALL!
THEN, SLOWLY, MERCILESSLY, THE COLD UNBLINKING EYES OF THE KEEPER OF THE FLAME GAZE UPWARD, LIKE TWIN RAYS OF LIVING HATE...
THE GIANT!
HE IS OUR ENEMY! DESTROY HIM!!
HOLD IT! YOU'VE GOT THIS ALL WRONG...!
DO NOT LET HIM TRICK YOU! STRIKE NOW!
STRIKE! AS THE KEEPER COMMANDS!
THEY'RE FIRING SOME SORT OF RAY GUNS AT ME!
THEY'RE NOT AS PRIMITIVE AS THEY LOOK!
DEATH TO THE GIANT!
OKAY... THAT DOES IT! I DON'T NEED A HOUSE TO FALL ON ME TO KNOW THAT I'M NOT WANTED!

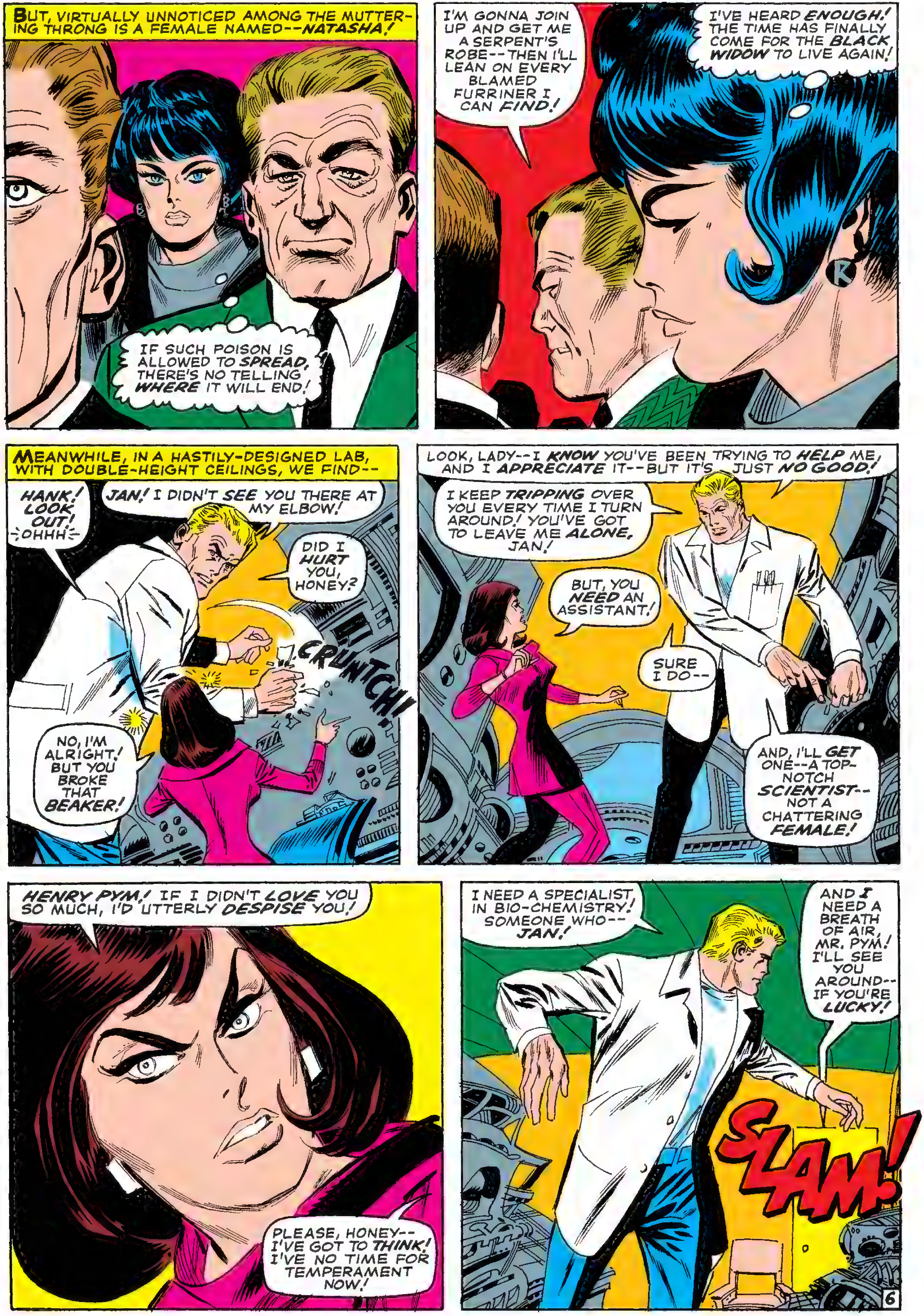

AFTER HIM! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE!
HIS SIZE CANNOT SAVE HIM!
THERE ARE TOO MANY OF US... AND WE ARE ARMED!
HE FEARS US! SEE HOW HE HAS RELEASED HIS CAPTIVE!
THEY THINK I'M AFRAID OF THEM! THEY DON'T REALIZE I JUST DON'T WANT TO HURT ANYONE IF I CAN HELP IT!
STAY BACK! LISTEN TO ME! I'M NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR BLASTED FLAME!
I'M JUST LOOKING FOR DR. ANTON!
HE LIES! SEIZE HIM!
OKAY, GROUP! IF THAT'S HOW YOU WANT IT...!
I'LL JUST SCATTER THEM FAST, AND THEN... HEY!
THIS IS LIKE A GRADE B MYSTERY MOVIE!..
..JUST WHEN THINGS GET GOING, THE LIGHTS GO OUT!
I KNOW I'M NOT ROCK HUDSON, BUT I DIDN'T THINK THAT I WAS THAT HARD TO LOOK AT!
BUT THEN, SUDDENLY...
QUICKLY.. FOLLOW ME! IT WAS I WHO COVERED THE CHAMBER WITH A SCREEN OF BLACK LIGHT!
OKAY! YOU'RE NOT WEARING A MOUSTACHE.. AND YOU'VE GOT WAVY HAIR.. SO YOU MUST BE A GOOD GUY!
I AM PRINCE REY, RIGHTFUL RULER OF THE FORBIDDEN LAND!
ONLY THE PRINCE POSSESSES A BLACK LIGHT ACTIVATOR! HE HAS BETRAYED US!
REY MUST ALSO DIE!
THE WORD OF THE KEEPER IS THE LAW ETERNAL!
DEATH TO THE GIANT.. AND TO PRINCE REY!

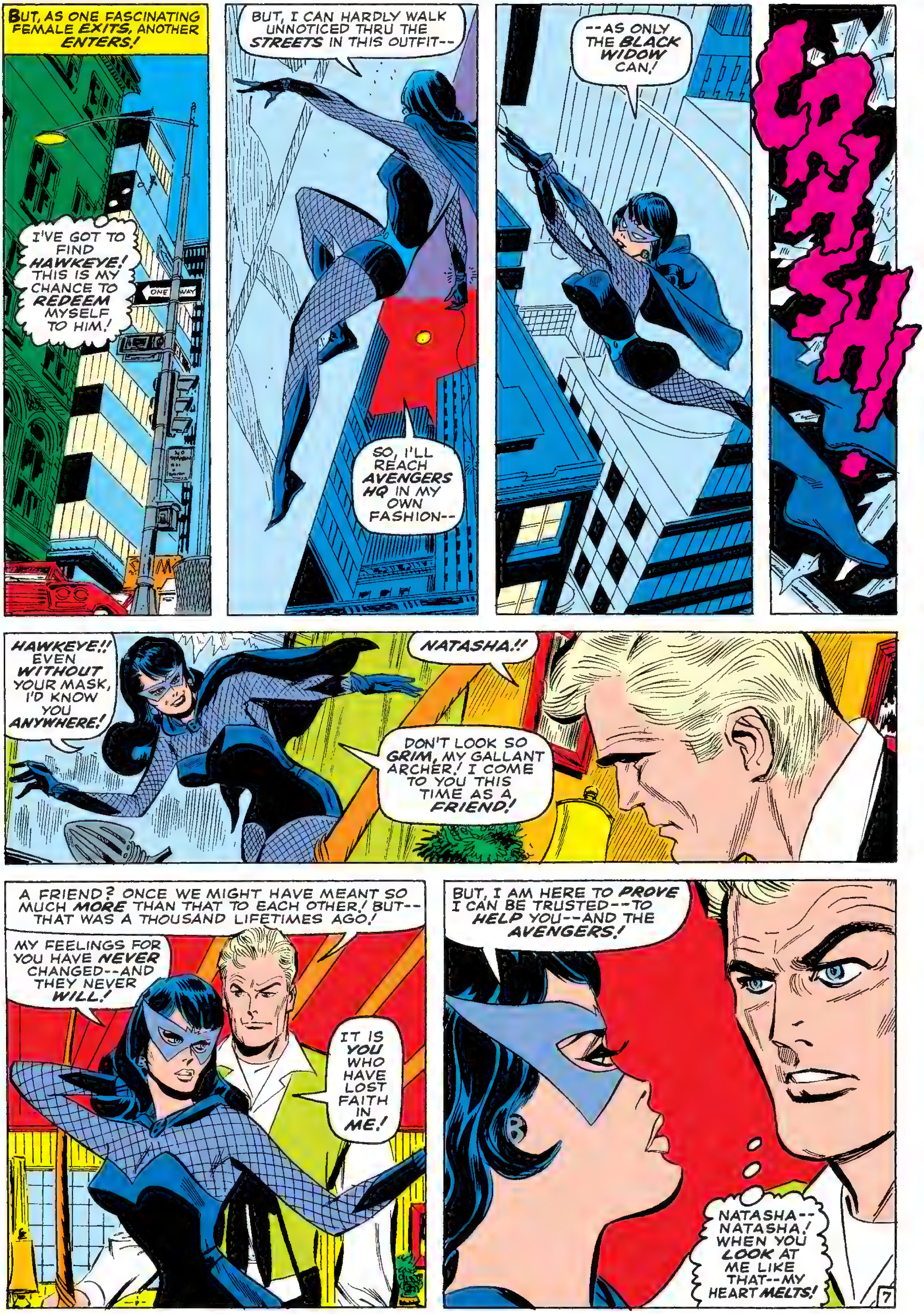

OKAY, NOW THAT EVERYONE'S THOROUGHLY CONFUSED... BACK TO NEW YORK AGAIN... WHERE WE FIND.. (TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE!)...
FALLING ALL THAT DISTANCE, ONTO A CONCRETE FLOOR, MIGHT HAVE FINISHED ANYONE ELSE!
BUT, POWER MAN IS NOT SOMEONE ELSE!
MY BODY HAS STRENGTH ENOUGH TO SURVIVE A HUNDRED SUCH SHATTERING FALLS!
BUT HAWKEYE WON'T SURVIVE OUR NEXT MEETING! ...GOOD! I STILL HEAR THE SOUNDS OF FIGHTING UP ABOVE!
I WANT TO REACH THAT BLUSTERING FOOL BEFORE SWORDSMAN SMASHES HIM WITHOUT ME!
HOWEVER, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH POWER MAN BETTER SPEED IT UP, OR HE'LL BE TOO LATE--!
TOUCHÉ, HAWKEYE! YOU FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, BUT NO MAN COULD DODGE MY SWORD'S LETHAL BLASTS FOREVER!
ZAK!
UNNHHHH!
LIKE I ALWAYS TOLD YOU, ARCHER... ONLY ONE OF US COULD BE THE MASTER... AND THAT ONE MUST ALWAYS BE.. THE SWORDSMAN!
TOO BAD YOU WOULDN'T THROW IN WITH US! WHAT A TEAM WE'D HAVE MADE!
SAVE YOUR EPITAPHS, MISTER! I'M SURPRISED AT YOU...!
BOK!
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO FIRST TAUGHT ME ALL ABOUT PLAYING POSSUM... REMEMBER?
NOW IT'S JUST YOU AND ME.. HAND TO HAND.. NO WEAPONS.. AND NO FLOWERY SPEECHES!
I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS, SWORDSMAN..
POW
..MUCH TOO LONG!
I'VE LIVED IN YOUR SHADOW FOR YEARS.. ALWAYS REMEMBERING THAT YOU WERE MY TUTOR... YOU WERE THE MASTER!
YOU NEVER LET ME FORGET IT!
KRAK!

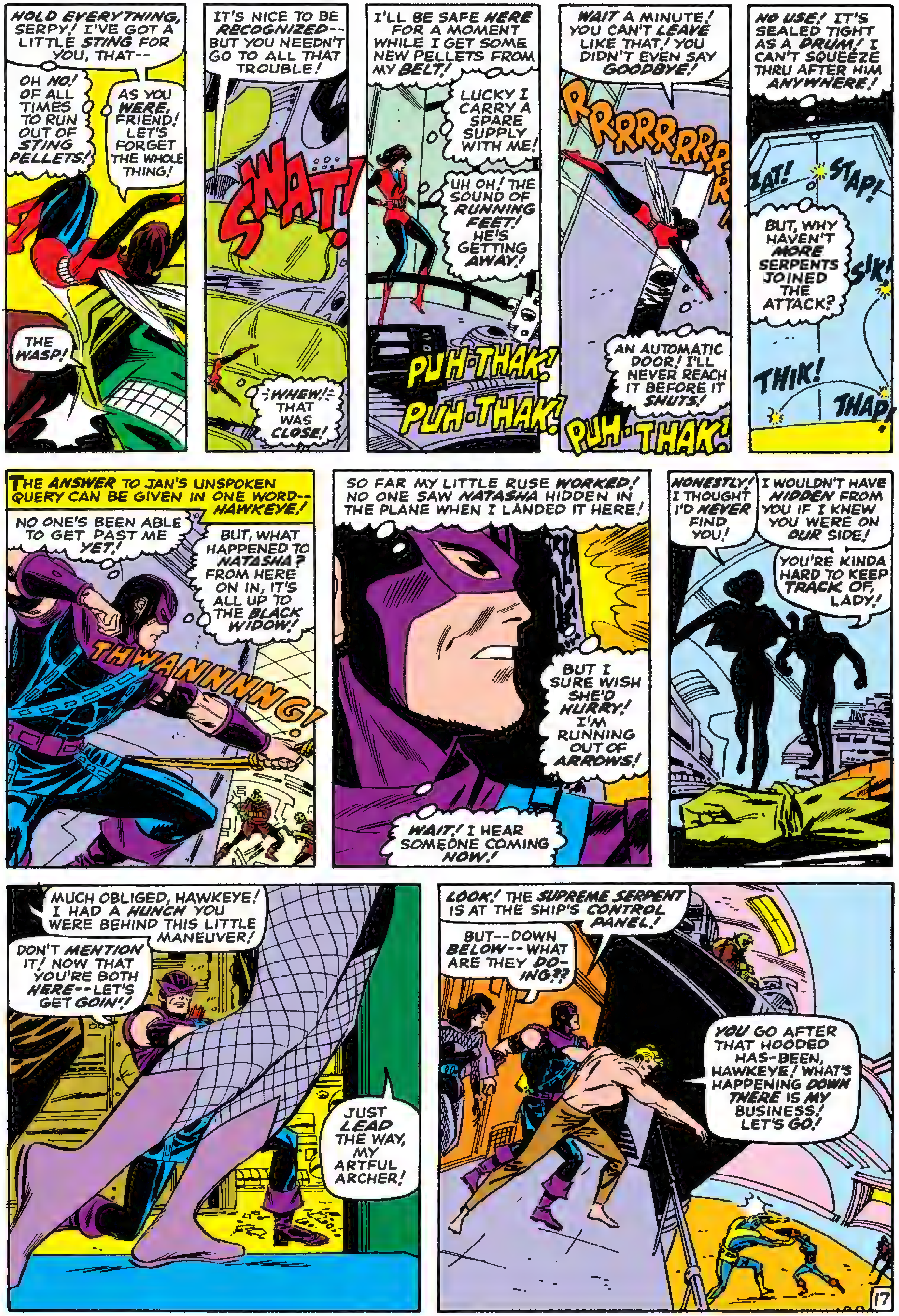

BUT, THE PAST IS OVER NOW! THE PAST IS DEAD!
YOU ARE THE MASTER NO LONGER!
I'M FREE OF YOU... AT LAST!
BUT THEN...
YOU WON'T FIND ME SO EASY TO BEAT!!
POWER MAN!!
HAH! YOU STRUGGLE LIKE A TRUE AVENGER! YOU FIGHT TO THE END!
IF I CAN JUST REACH BACK, BEHIND HIS HEAD.. GET A GRIP ON HIM, AND EXERT LEVERAGE AT THE RIGHT SECOND..!
FOOTSTEPS! SOMEONE BEHIND US!
I LIKE THAT! IT'LL MAKE MY VICTORY ALL THE MORE SATISFYING!
ZTAKK!
RELEASE HIM.. NOW!
NATASHA!!
HE RELEASED ME! NOW IT'S MY TURN!
HURRY, HAWKEYE! THE BLACK WIDOW'S BITE CANNOT HOLD HIM MUCH LONGER!
DON'T WORRY, NATASHA ...
... HE'S FINISHED!
NO! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?? YOU'RE AIMING MUCH TOO HIGH..!!
THOK!
AM I?
HAH! YOU MISSED ME!
18.

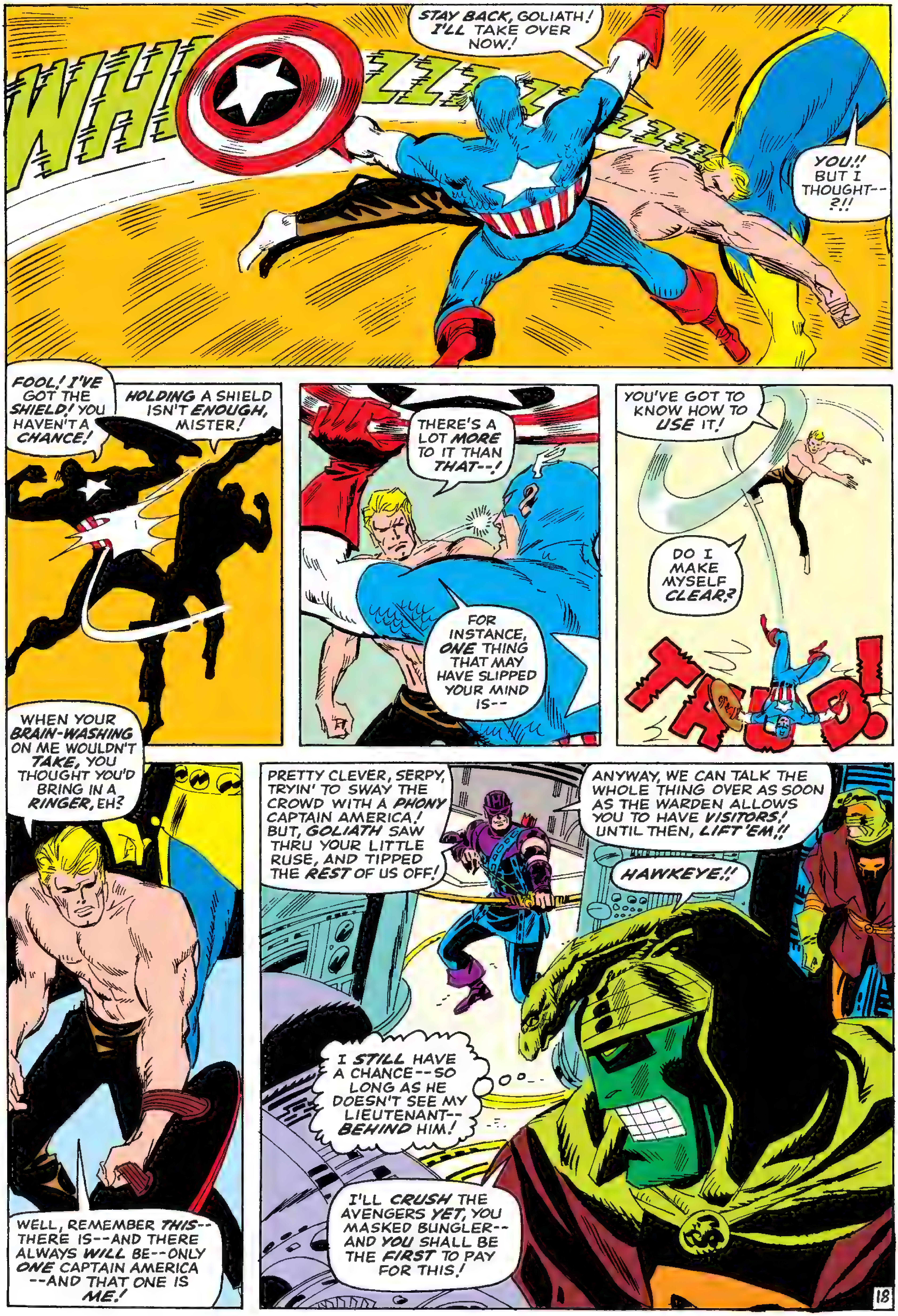

SURE I DID! BUT, I HIT THE TOP OF THAT BEAM!
WROP!
AND MY SECOND ARROW SMASHED THE BOTTOM OF IT!
BACK, NATASHA... QUICKLY! THIS IS IT!
RRRR
RRRRR
WITH THAT PILLAR SHATTERED, HALF THE ROOF IS COLLAPSING.. SHOWERING TONS OF BRICK DOWN UPON HIM!!
THAT DOES IT! EVEN WITH HIS TREMENDOUS STRENGTH, I'LL BE LONG GONE BEFORE HE CAN FREE HIMSELF!
HAWKEYE! WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
BACK TO THE AVENGERS--- WHERE I BELONG!
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU HELPED ME AT THE LAST MINUTE, NATASHA, BUT...
BECAUSE I CAME TO MY SENSES! THE BRAINWASHING WORE OFF!
BRAINWASHING?!!
YOU MEAN..?
OH, MY DARLING! DID YOU THINK I WOULD EVER HARM YOU... EVER TURN AGAINST YOU..??
IT WAS THE REDS! THEY BRAINWASHED ME INTO BETRAYING YOU!
BUT, WHEN IT MATTERED MOST, MY LOVE FOR YOU WON OUT! I FREED MYSELF FROM THEIR INSIDIOUS CONTROL! YOU--YOU MUST BELIEVE ME!
I WANT TO, NATASHA! OH, HOW I WANT TO..!
NOW, AS WE DRY OUR EYES, IT'S SCENE-SWITCHING TIME AGAIN... SO, BACK TO AVENGERS HQ...
A LIVE NEWS TELECAST... FROM SOUTH AMERICA!
OH! IT'S OUR MISSING ROCKET AIR CAR!
HERE IN THE AMAZON REGION, POLICE ARE TRYING TO EXPLAIN THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WORLD-FAMOUS DR. FRANZ ANTON! THE ONLY CLUE IS THIS STRANGE CRAFT FOUND NEAR HIS LABORATORY..!

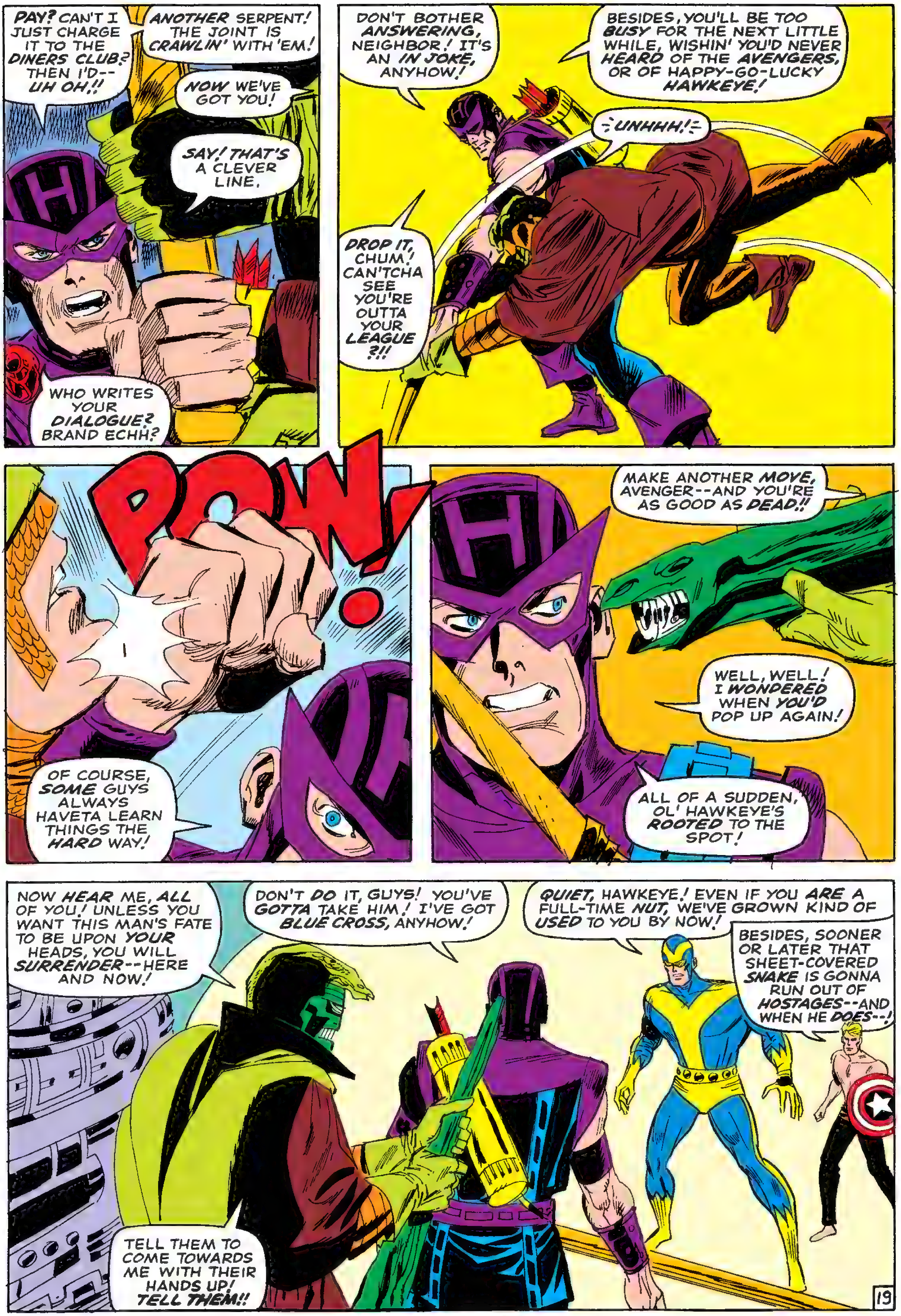

HANK IS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HAVE TAKEN THE AIR OAR! HE MUST HAVE FLOWN TO SEE DR. ANTON!
BUT...THE DOCTOR IS MISSING... AND THERE'S NO TRACE OF GOLIATH, EITHER!
SOMETHING TERRIBLE MUST HAVE HAPPENED! I KNOW IT! I JUST KNOW IT!
CAP! CAP! I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU! WE HAVE TO DO SOME-THING!
EASY, JAN! I'VE ALREADY SEEN THE PAPER... AND HEARD THE TELECAST! WHATEVER TROUBLE GOLIATH MAY BE IN DOWN THERE... HE WON'T FACE IT ALONE! I PROMISE YOU THAT!
THEN... YOU THINK HE MAY BE IN SOME SORT OF MYSTERIOUS DANGER, TOO! HOW CAN WE EVER REACH HIM IN TIME?
YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER ONE THING!
GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, GIRL!
GOLIATH IS THE MOST POWERFUL AVENGER OF ANY OF US! WHATEVER THREAT HE MAY BE FACING, MY MONEY'S ON HIM!
AND NOW, YOU MAY BE PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THIS IS POSITIVELY THE LAST CHANGE-OF-SCENE WE'LL TOSS AT YOU THIS ISH... MAINLY BECAUSE WE'VE CLEAN RUN OUT OF PANELS!
AN UNDISCOVERED RACE... DWELLING HERE IN A FORBIDDEN LAND!
LED BY A FANATICAL KEEPER OF THE FLAME WHO CHOOSES TO KILL ANY INTRUDER, RATHER THAN LET THEIR SECRET BE REVEALED TO THE OUT-SIDE WORLD!
BUT, WHAT IS THEIR UNKNOWN SECRET? AND, HOW IS IT TIED IN WITH THAT STRANGE, DAZZLING, SEEMINGLY-ETERNAL FLAME?
I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT! THERE'S A FAR GREATER MYSTERY HERE THAN I SUS-PECTED..
PERHAPS THE FATES THEMSELVES HAVE SENT YOU TO AID US... FOR, IF YOU TOO SHOULD FAIL, THEN ALL OF EARTH MAY WELL BE DOOMED... FOREVER!
..AND, PERHAPS A FAR GREATER MENACE TO THE HUMAN RACE THAN ANY WE HAVE EVER FACED!
MUSTER THE GUARD! WE STRIKE OUT AT ONCE!
ONLY THE ACCURSED PRINCE REY COULD HAVE AIDED THE GIANT! THEREFORE, THEY BOTH MUST DIE! IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL FLAME, WE MUST NOT FAIL!
THEY CANNOT ESCAPE! NONE CAN DEFY OUR SUPREME KEEPER!
THEN... LET THE PURSUIT BEGIN!!
NEXT ISH
BY THE BLAZING BEDEVILMENT OF THE ETERNAL FLAME, WE PROMISE TO TIE TOGETHER ALL THE LOOSE ENDS YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED READING, AND WEAVE THEM INTO A WONDROUS WEB OF STUPEFYING SPECTACLE! SO DON'T MISS THE FIREWORKS WHEN THE MIGHTY AVENGERS ASSEMBLE ONCE AGAIN!..SEE YA, TIGER!
20.

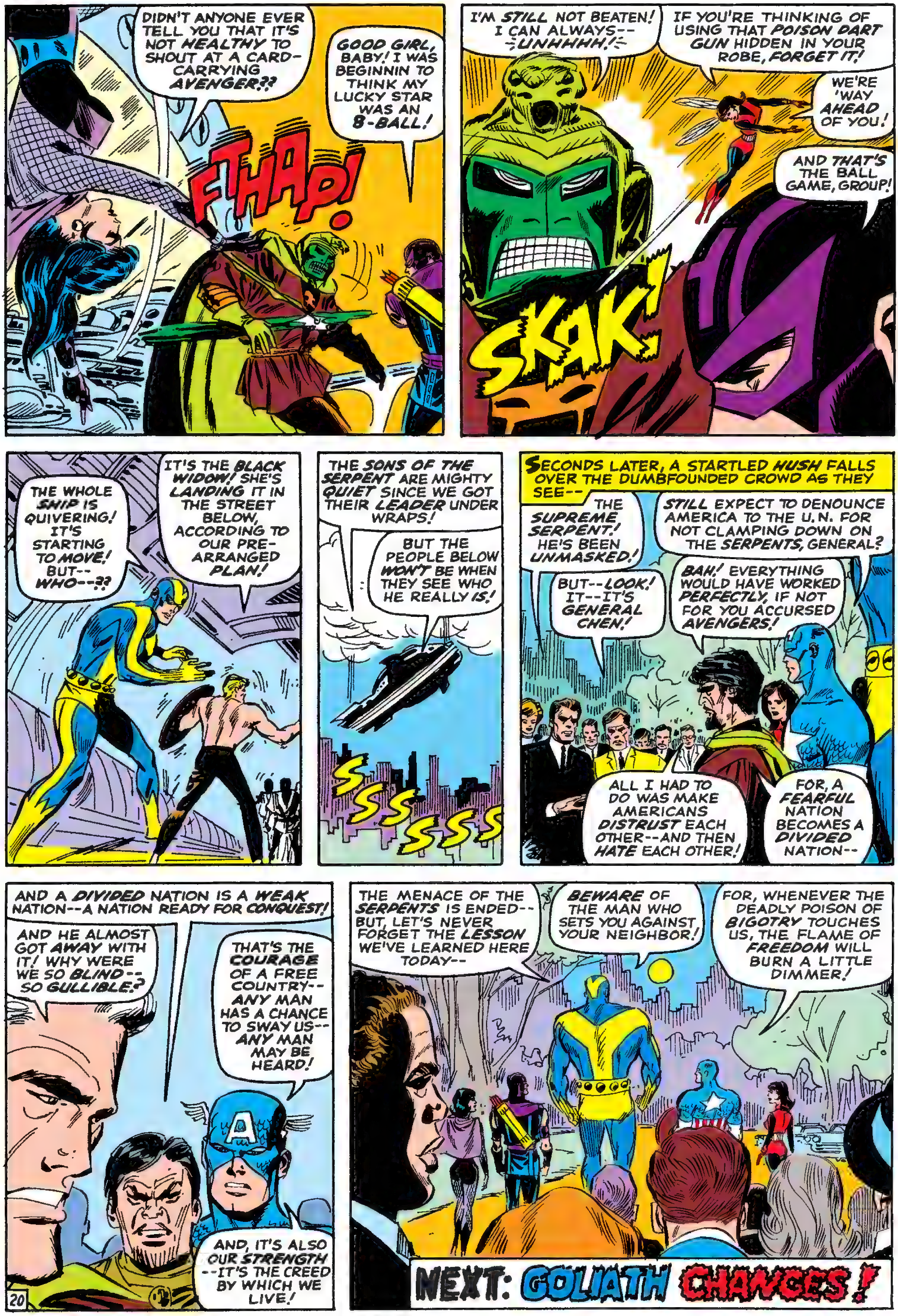

BUT, VIRTUALLY UNNOTICED AMONG THE MUTTERING THRONG IS A FEMALE NAMED--NATASHA!
IF SUCH POISON IS ALLOWED TO SPREAD, THERE'S NO TELLING WHERE IT WILL END!
I'M GONNA JOIN UP AND GET ME A SERPENT'S ROBE--THEN I'LL LEAN ON EVERY BLAMED FURRINER I CAN FIND!
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH! THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME FOR THE BLACK WIDOW TO LIVE AGAIN!
MEANWHILE, IN A HASTILY-DESIGNED LAB, WITH DOUBLE-HEIGHT CEILINGS, WE FIND--
HANK! LOOK OUT! OHHH
JAN! I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE AT MY ELBOW!
DID I HURT YOU, HONEY?
CRUNTCH!
NO, I'M ALRIGHT! BUT YOU BROKE THAT BEAKER!
LOOK, LADY--I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO HELP ME, AND I APPRECIATE IT--BUT IT'S JUST NO GOOD!
I KEEP TRIPPING OVER YOU EVERY TIME I TURN AROUND! YOU'VE GOT TO LEAVE ME ALONE, JAN!
BUT, YOU NEED AN ASSISTANT!
SURE I DO--
AND, I'LL GET ONE--A TOP-NOTCH SCIENTIST--NOT A CHATTERING FEMALE!
HENRY PYM! IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU SO MUCH, I'D UTTERLY DESPISE YOU!
PLEASE, HONEY--I'VE GOT TO THINK! I'VE NO TIME FOR TEMPERAMENT NOW!
I NEED A SPECIALIST IN BIO-CHEMISTRY! SOMEONE WHO--JAN!
AND I NEED A BREATH OF AIR, MR. PYM! I'LL SEE YOU AROUND--IF YOU'RE LUCKY!
SLAM!
6


BUT, AS ONE FASCINATING FEMALE *EXITS,* ANOTHER *ENTERS!*
I'VE GOT TO FIND *HAWKEYE!* THIS IS MY CHANCE TO *REDEEM* MYSELF TO HIM!
ONE WAY
BUT, I CAN HARDLY WALK UNNOTICED THRU THE *STREETS* IN THIS OUTFIT--
SO, I'LL REACH *AVENGERS HQ* IN MY OWN FASHION--
--AS ONLY THE *BLACK WIDOW* CAN!
CRASH!
HAWKEYE!! EVEN *WITHOUT* YOUR MASK, I'D KNOW YOU *ANYWHERE!*
NATASHA!!
DON'T LOOK SO *GRIM,* MY GALLANT ARCHER! I COME TO YOU THIS TIME AS A *FRIEND!*
A FRIEND? ONCE WE MIGHT HAVE MEANT SO MUCH *MORE* THAN THAT TO EACH OTHER! BUT-- THAT WAS A THOUSAND LIFETIMES AGO!
MY FEELINGS FOR YOU HAVE *NEVER* CHANGED--AND THEY NEVER *WILL!*
IT IS *YOU* WHO HAVE LOST FAITH IN *ME!*
BUT, I AM HERE TO *PROVE* I CAN BE TRUSTED--TO *HELP* YOU--AND THE *AVENGERS!*
NATASHA-- NATASHA! WHEN YOU *LOOK* AT ME LIKE THAT--MY HEART *MELTS!*

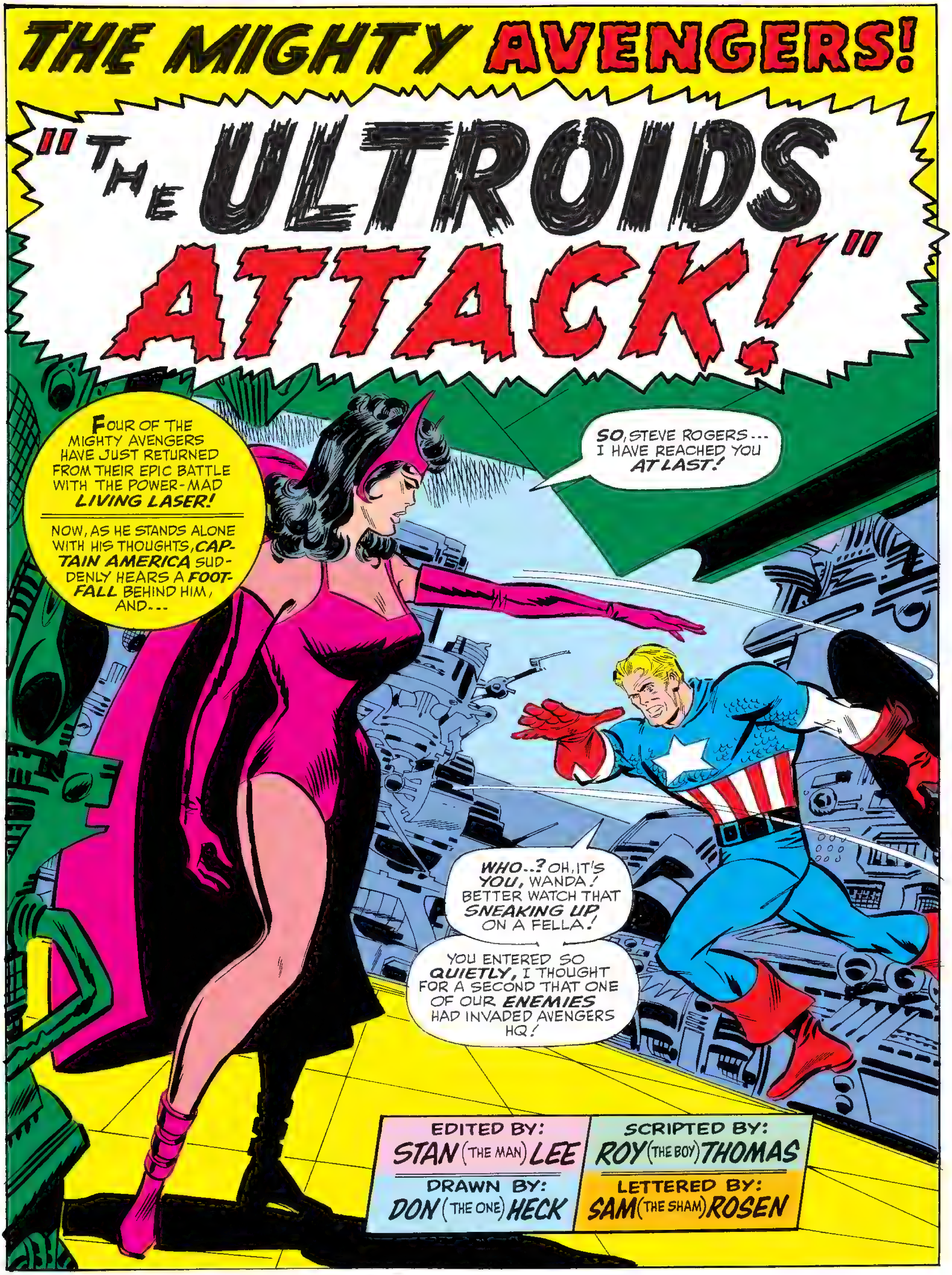

HOLD EVERYTHING, SERPY! I'VE GOT A LITTLE STING FOR YOU, THAT--
OH NO! OF ALL TIMES TO RUN OUT OF STING PELLETS!
AS YOU WERE, FRIEND! LET'S FORGET THE WHOLE THING!
THE WASP!
IT'S NICE TO BE RECOGNIZED-- BUT YOU NEEDN'T GO TO ALL THAT TROUBLE!
SNAT!
WHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE!
I'LL BE SAFE HERE FOR A MOMENT WHILE I GET SOME NEW PELLETS FROM MY BELT!
LUCKY I CARRY A SPARE SUPPLY WITH ME!
UH OH! THE SOUND OF RUNNING FEET! HE'S GETTING AWAY!
PUH-THAK!
PUH-THAK!
WAIT A MINUTE! YOU CAN'T LEAVE LIKE THAT! YOU DIDN'T EVEN SAY GOODBYE!
RRRRRRRRRR
AN AUTOMATIC DOOR! I'LL NEVER REACH IT BEFORE IT SHUTS!
PUH-THAK!
NO USE! IT'S SEALED TIGHT AS A DRUM! I CAN'T SQUEEZE THRU AFTER HIM ANYWHERE!
ZAT!
STAP!
BUT, WHY HAVEN'T MORE SERPENTS JOINED THE ATTACK?
SIK!
THIK!
THAP!
THE ANSWER TO JAN'S UNSPOKEN QUERY CAN BE GIVEN IN ONE WORD-- HAWKEYE!
NO ONE'S BEEN ABLE TO GET PAST ME YET!
BUT, WHAT HAPPENED TO NATASHA? FROM HERE ON IN, IT'S ALL UP TO THE BLACK WIDOW!
THWANNNNNG!
SO FAR MY LITTLE RUSE WORKED! NO ONE SAW NATASHA HIDDEN IN THE PLANE WHEN I LANDED IT HERE!
BUT I SURE WISH SHE'D HURRY! I'M RUNNING OUT OF ARROWS!
WAIT! I HEAR SOMEONE COMING NOW!
HONESTLY! I THOUGHT I'D NEVER FIND YOU!
I WOULDN'T HAVE HIDDEN FROM YOU IF I KNEW YOU WERE ON OUR SIDE!
YOU'RE KINDA HARD TO KEEP TRACK OF, LADY!
MUCH OBLIGED, HAWKEYE! I HAD A HUNCH YOU WERE BEHIND THIS LITTLE MANEUVER!
DON'T MENTION IT! NOW THAT YOU'RE BOTH HERE--LET'S GET GOIN'!
JUST LEAD THE WAY, MY ARTFUL ARCHER!
LOOK! THE SUPREME SERPENT IS AT THE SHIP'S CONTROL PANEL!
BUT--DOWN BELOW--WHAT ARE THEY DOING??
YOU GO AFTER THAT HOODED HAS-BEEN, HAWKEYE! WHAT'S HAPPENING DOWN THERE IS MY BUSINESS! LET'S GO!
17

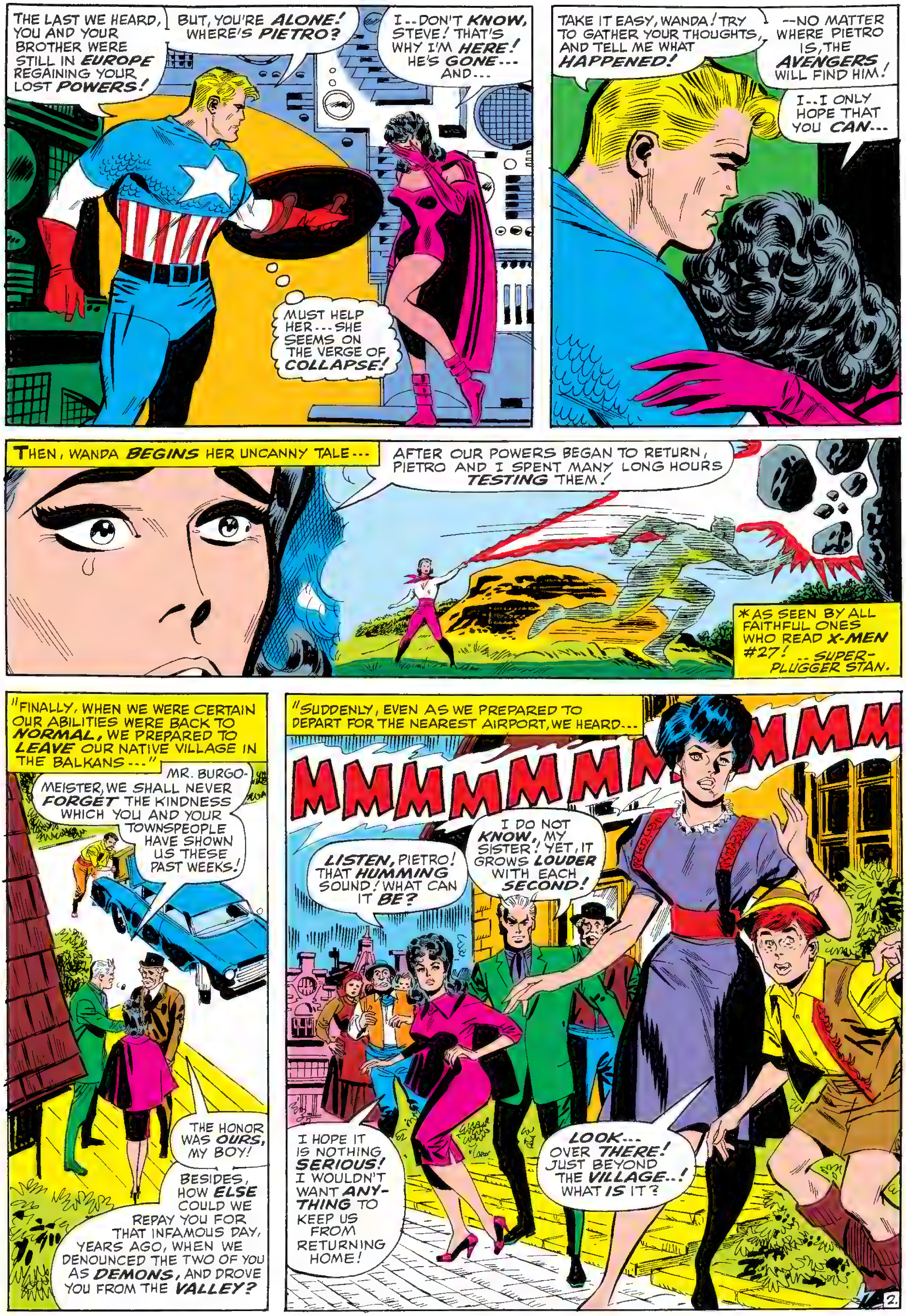

WHOZZZZZZ
STAY BACK, GOLIATH! I'LL TAKE OVER NOW!
YOU!! BUT I THOUGHT--?!!
FOOL! I'VE GOT THE SHIELD! YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE!
HOLDING A SHIELD ISN'T ENOUGH, MISTER!
THERE'S A LOT MORE TO IT THAN THAT--!
FOR INSTANCE, ONE THING THAT MAY HAVE SLIPPED YOUR MIND IS--
YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW HOW TO USE IT!
DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?
THUD!
WHEN YOUR BRAIN-WASHING ON ME WOULDN'T TAKE, YOU THOUGHT YOU'D BRING IN A RINGER, EH?
WELL, REMEMBER THIS--THERE IS--AND THERE ALWAYS WILL BE--ONLY ONE CAPTAIN AMERICA--AND THAT ONE IS ME!
PRETTY CLEVER, SERPY, TRYIN' TO SWAY THE CROWD WITH A PHONY CAPTAIN AMERICA! BUT, GOLIATH SAW THRU YOUR LITTLE RUSE, AND TIPPED THE REST OF US OFF!
ANYWAY, WE CAN TALK THE WHOLE THING OVER AS SOON AS THE WARDEN ALLOWS YOU TO HAVE VISITORS! UNTIL THEN, LIFT 'EM!!
HAWKEYE!!
I STILL HAVE A CHANCE--SO LONG AS HE DOESN'T SEE MY LIEUTENANT--BEHIND HIM!
I'LL CRUSH THE AVENGERS YET, YOU MASKED BUNGLER--AND YOU SHALL BE THE FIRST TO PAY FOR THIS!

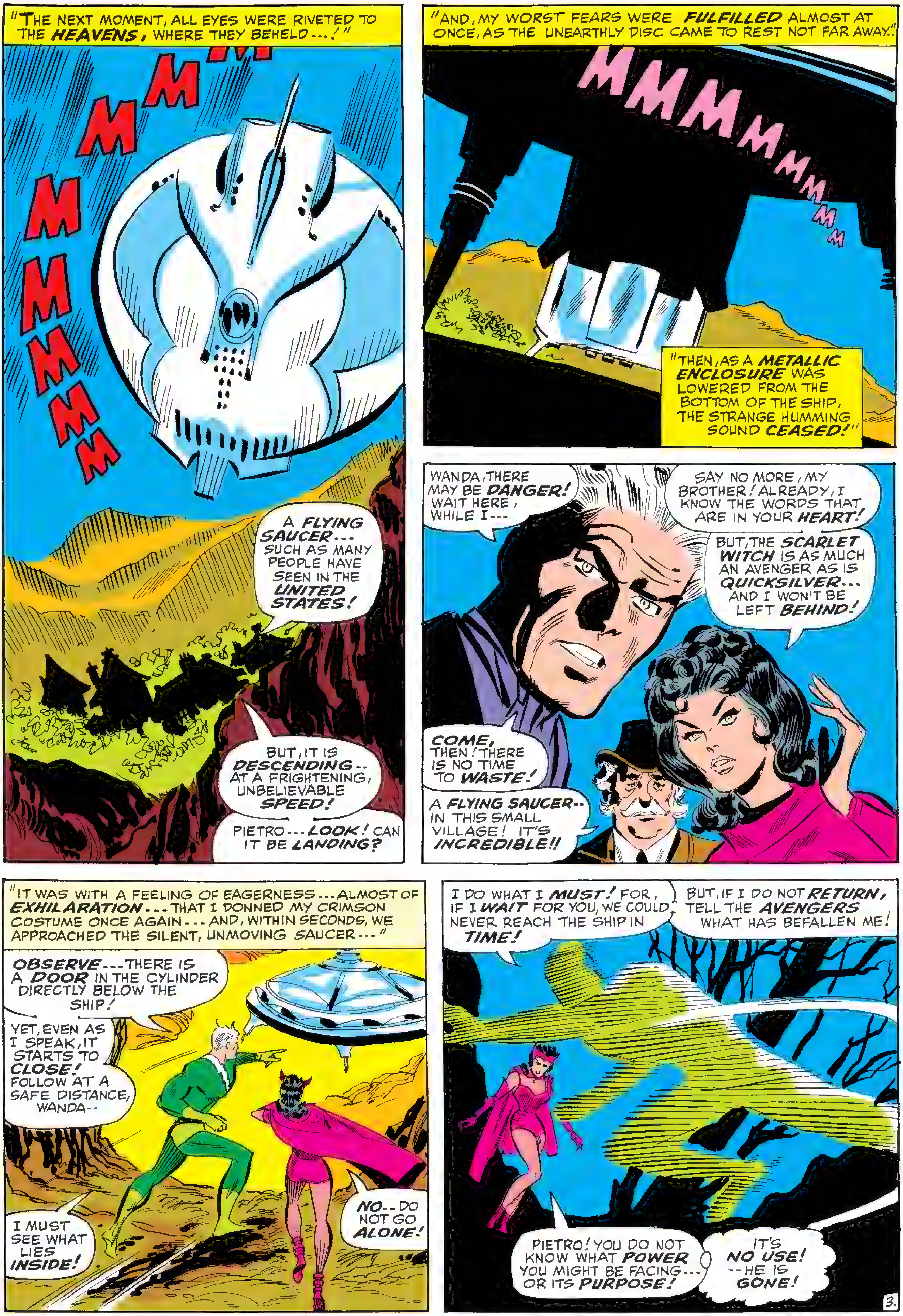

PAY? CAN'T I JUST CHARGE IT TO THE DINERS CLUB? THEN I'D-- UH OH!!
ANOTHER SERPENT! THE JOINT IS CRAWLIN' WITH 'EM!
NOW WE'VE GOT YOU!
SAY! THAT'S A CLEVER LINE.
WHO WRITES YOUR DIALOGUE? BRAND ECHH?
DON'T BOTHER ANSWERING, NEIGHBOR! IT'S AN IN JOKE, ANYHOW!
BESIDES, YOU'LL BE TOO BUSY FOR THE NEXT LITTLE WHILE, WISHIN' YOU'D NEVER HEARD OF THE AVENGERS, OR OF HAPPY-GO-LUCKY HAWKEYE!
UNHHH!
DROP IT, CHUM! CAN'TCHA SEE YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR LEAGUE ?!!
POW!
OF COURSE, SOME GUYS ALWAYS HAVETA LEARN THINGS THE HARD WAY!
MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, AVENGER--AND YOU'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD!!
WELL, WELL! I WONDERED WHEN YOU'D POP UP AGAIN!
ALL OF A SUDDEN, OL' HAWKEYE'S ROOTED TO THE SPOT!
NOW HEAR ME, ALL OF YOU! UNLESS YOU WANT THIS MAN'S FATE TO BE UPON YOUR HEADS, YOU WILL SURRENDER--HERE AND NOW!
TELL THEM TO COME TOWARDS ME WITH THEIR HANDS UP! TELL THEM!!
DON'T DO IT, GUYS! YOU'VE GOTTA TAKE HIM! I'VE GOT BLUE CROSS, ANYHOW!
QUIET, HAWKEYE! EVEN IF YOU ARE A FULL-TIME NUT, WE'VE GROWN KIND OF USED TO YOU BY NOW!
BESIDES, SOONER OR LATER THAT SHEET-COVERED SNAKE IS GONNA RUN OUT OF HOSTAGES--AND WHEN HE DOES--!

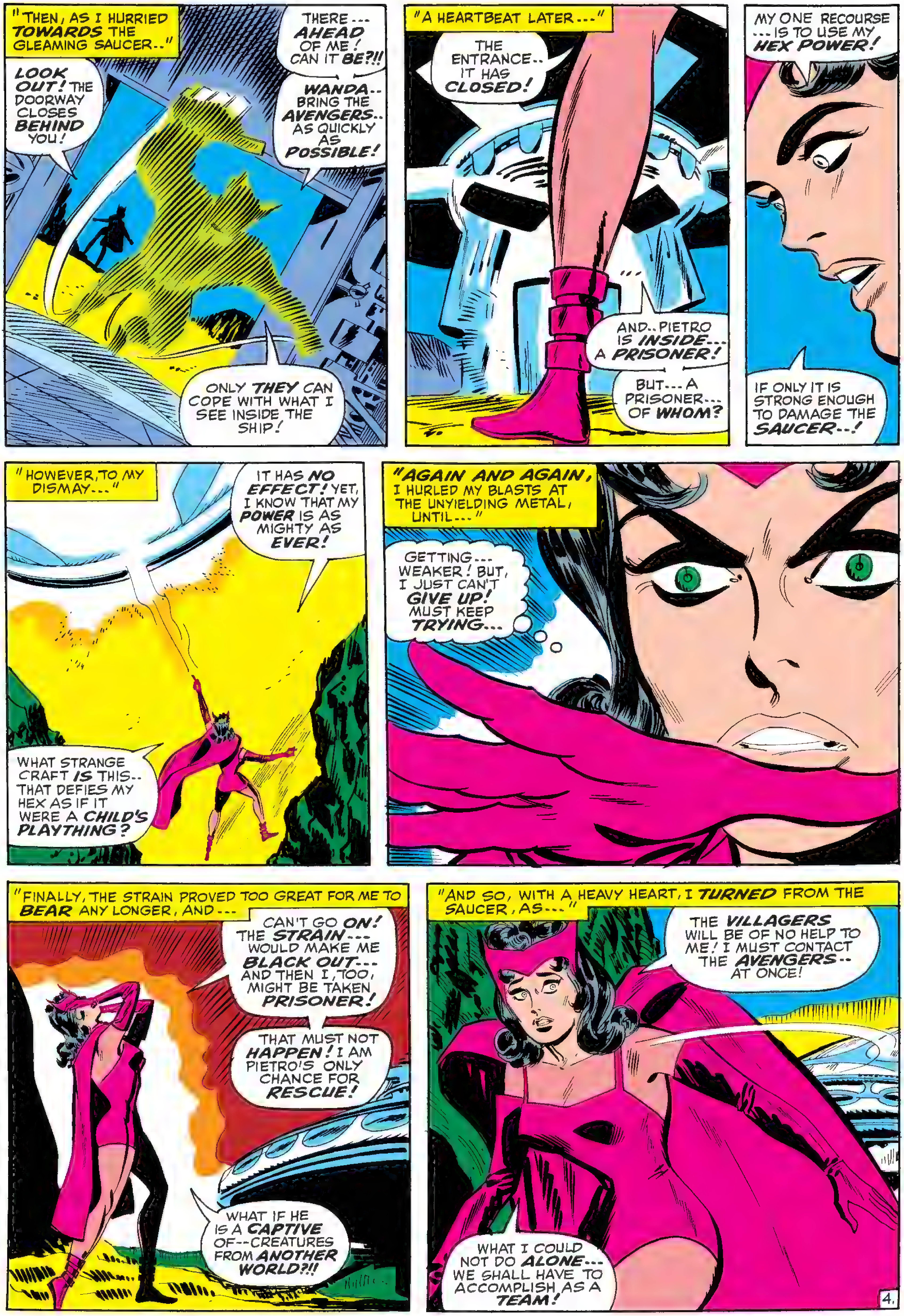

DIDN'T ANYONE EVER TELL YOU THAT IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO SHOUT AT A CARD-CARRYING AVENGER??
GOOD GIRL, BABY! I WAS BEGINNIN' TO THINK MY LUCKY STAR WAS AN 8-BALL!
FTHAP!
I'M STILL NOT BEATEN! I CAN ALWAYS-- UNHHHH!
IF YOU'RE THINKING OF USING THAT POISON DART GUN HIDDEN IN YOUR ROBE, FORGET IT!
WE'RE 'WAY AHEAD OF YOU!
AND THAT'S THE BALL GAME, GROUP!
SKAK!
THE WHOLE SHIP IS QUIVERING! IT'S STARTING TO MOVE! BUT-- WHO--??
IT'S THE BLACK WIDOW! SHE'S LANDING IT IN THE STREET BELOW, ACCORDING TO OUR PRE-ARRANGED PLAN!
THE SONS OF THE SERPENT ARE MIGHTY QUIET SINCE WE GOT THEIR LEADER UNDER WRAPS!
BUT THE PEOPLE BELOW WON'T BE WHEN THEY SEE WHO HE REALLY IS!
SSSSSS
SECONDS LATER, A STARTLED HUSH FALLS OVER THE DUMBFOUNDED CROWD AS THEY SEE--
THE SUPREME SERPENT! HE'S BEEN UNMASKED!
STILL EXPECT TO DENOUNCE AMERICA TO THE U.N. FOR NOT CLAMPING DOWN ON THE SERPENTS, GENERAL?
BUT--LOOK! IT--IT'S GENERAL CHEN!
BAH! EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE WORKED PERFECTLY, IF NOT FOR YOU ACCURSED AVENGERS!
ALL I HAD TO DO WAS MAKE AMERICANS DISTRUST EACH OTHER--AND THEN HATE EACH OTHER!
FOR, A FEARFUL NATION BECOMES A DIVIDED NATION--
AND A DIVIDED NATION IS A WEAK NATION--A NATION READY FOR CONQUEST!
AND HE ALMOST GOT AWAY WITH IT! WHY WERE WE SO BLIND--SO GULLIBLE?
THAT'S THE COURAGE OF A FREE COUNTRY--ANY MAN HAS A CHANCE TO SWAY US--ANY MAN MAY BE HEARD!
AND, IT'S ALSO OUR STRENGTH--IT'S THE CREED BY WHICH WE LIVE!
THE MENACE OF THE SERPENTS IS ENDED--BUT, LET'S NEVER FORGET THE LESSON WE'VE LEARNED HERE TODAY--
BEWARE OF THE MAN WHO SETS YOU AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR!
FOR, WHENEVER THE DEADLY POISON OF BIGOTRY TOUCHES US, THE FLAME OF FREEDOM WILL BURN A LITTLE DIMMER!
NEXT: GOLIATH CHANGES!

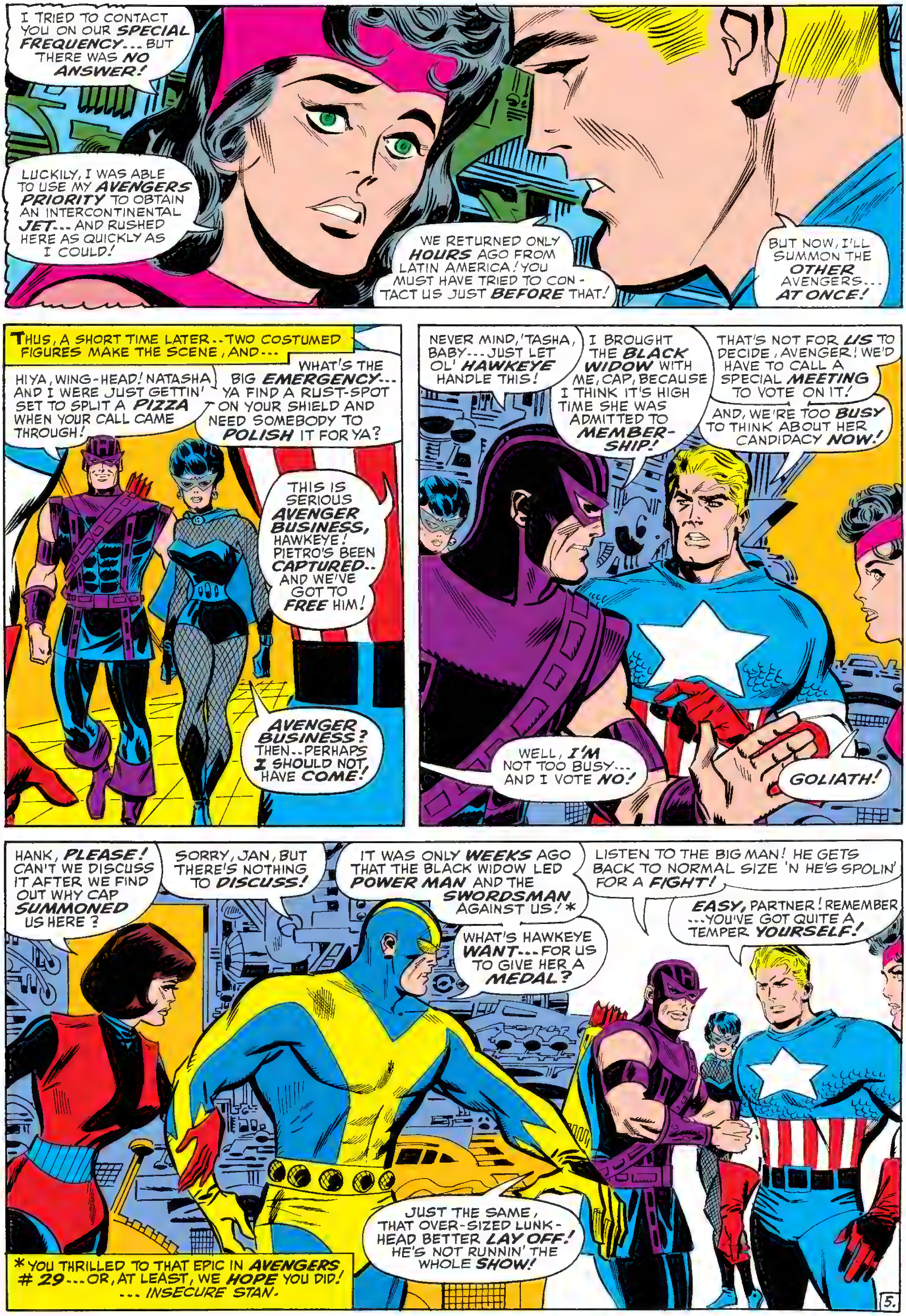
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
"The ULTROIDS ATTACK!"
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
36 JAN

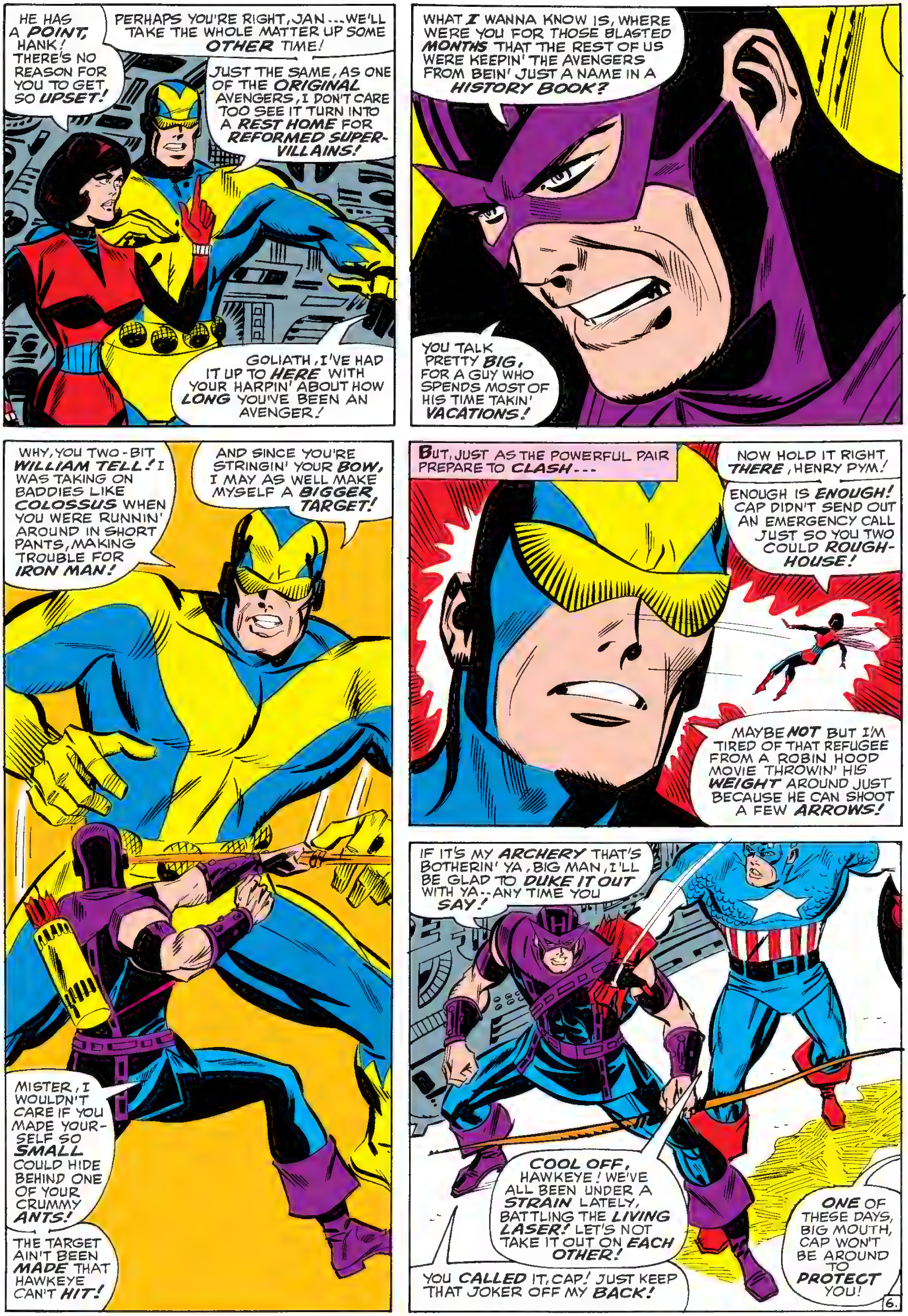

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"THE ULTROIDS ATTACK!"
FOUR OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM THEIR EPIC BATTLE WITH THE POWER-MAD LIVING LASER!
NOW, AS HE STANDS ALONE WITH HIS THOUGHTS, CAPTAIN AMERICA SUDDENLY HEARS A FOOTFALL BEHIND HIM, AND...
SO, STEVE ROGERS... I HAVE REACHED YOU AT LAST!
WHO..? OH, IT'S YOU, WANDA! BETTER WATCH THAT SNEAKING UP ON A FELLA!
YOU ENTERED SO QUIETLY, I THOUGHT FOR A SECOND THAT ONE OF OUR ENEMIES HAD INVADED AVENGERS HQ!
EDITED BY: STAN (THE MAN) LEE
SCRIPTED BY: ROY (THE BOY) THOMAS
DRAWN BY: DON (THE ONE) HECK
LETTERED BY: SAM (THE SHAM) ROSEN

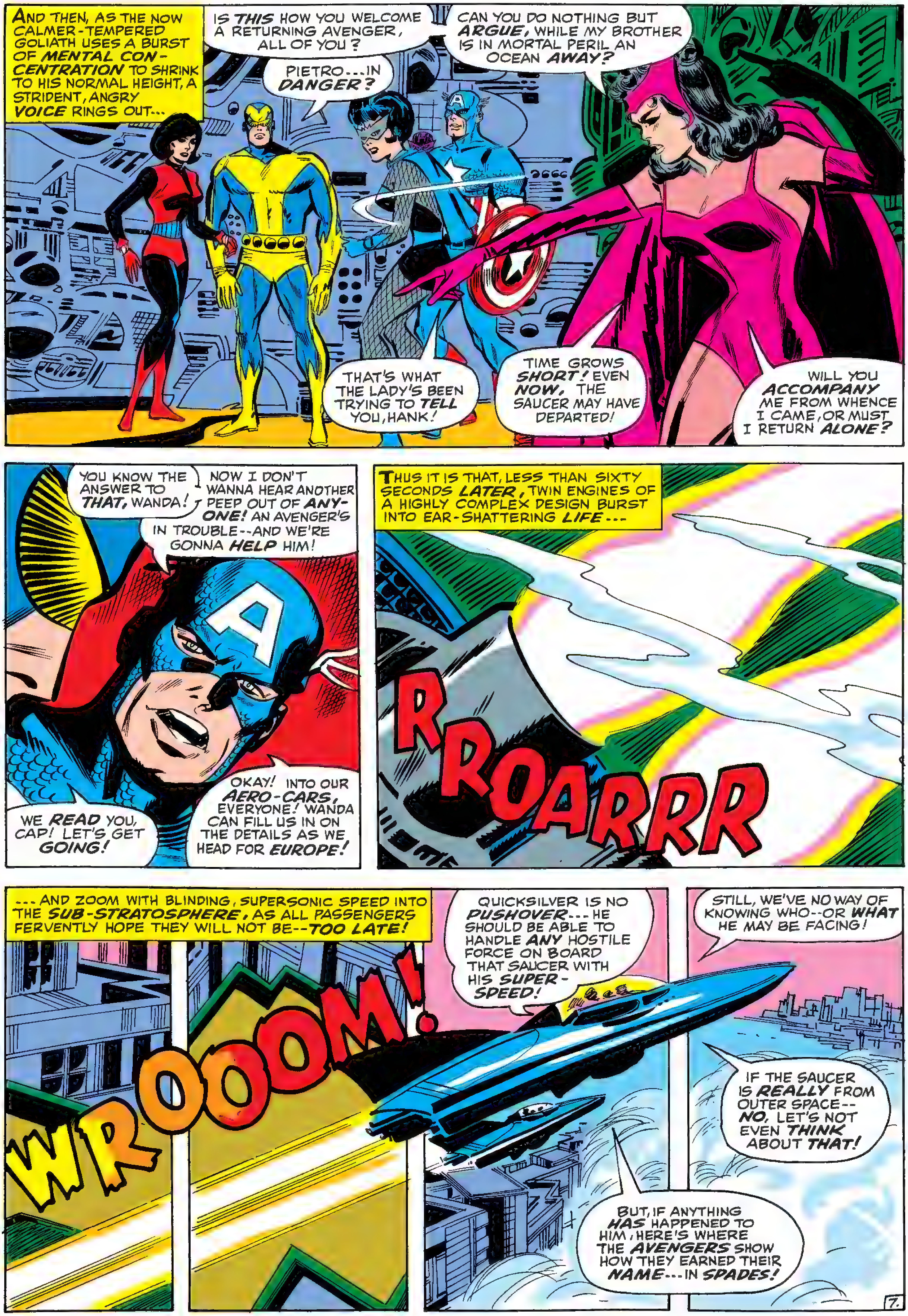

THE LAST WE HEARD, YOU AND YOUR BROTHER WERE STILL IN EUROPE REGAINING YOUR LOST POWERS!
BUT, YOU'RE ALONE! WHERE'S PIETRO?
I--DON'T KNOW, STEVE! THAT'S WHY I'M HERE! HE'S GONE--- AND---
MUST HELP HER---SHE SEEMS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE!
TAKE IT EASY, WANDA! TRY TO GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS, AND TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED!
--NO MATTER WHERE PIETRO IS, THE AVENGERS WILL FIND HIM!
I--I ONLY HOPE THAT YOU CAN---
THEN, WANDA BEGINS HER UNCANNY TALE---
AFTER OUR POWERS BEGAN TO RETURN, PIETRO AND I SPENT MANY LONG HOURS TESTING THEM!*
*AS SEEN BY ALL FAITHFUL ONES WHO READ X-MEN #27! ..SUPER-PLUGGER STAN.
"FINALLY, WHEN WE WERE CERTAIN OUR ABILITIES WERE BACK TO NORMAL, WE PREPARED TO LEAVE OUR NATIVE VILLAGE IN THE BALKANS---"
MR. BURGOMEISTER, WE SHALL NEVER FORGET THE KINDNESS WHICH YOU AND YOUR TOWNSPEOPLE HAVE SHOWN US THESE PAST WEEKS!
THE HONOR WAS OURS, MY BOY!
BESIDES, HOW ELSE COULD WE REPAY YOU FOR THAT INFAMOUS DAY, YEARS AGO, WHEN WE DENOUNCED THE TWO OF YOU AS DEMONS, AND DROVE YOU FROM THE VALLEY?
"SUDDENLY, EVEN AS WE PREPARED TO DEPART FOR THE NEAREST AIRPORT, WE HEARD---
MMMMMMMMMMMMM
LISTEN, PIETRO! THAT HUMMING SOUND! WHAT CAN IT BE?
I DO NOT KNOW, MY SISTER! YET, IT GROWS LOUDER WITH EACH SECOND!
I HOPE IT IS NOTHING SERIOUS! I WOULDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO KEEP US FROM RETURNING HOME!
LOOK--- OVER THERE! JUST BEYOND THE VILLAGE..! WHAT IS IT?

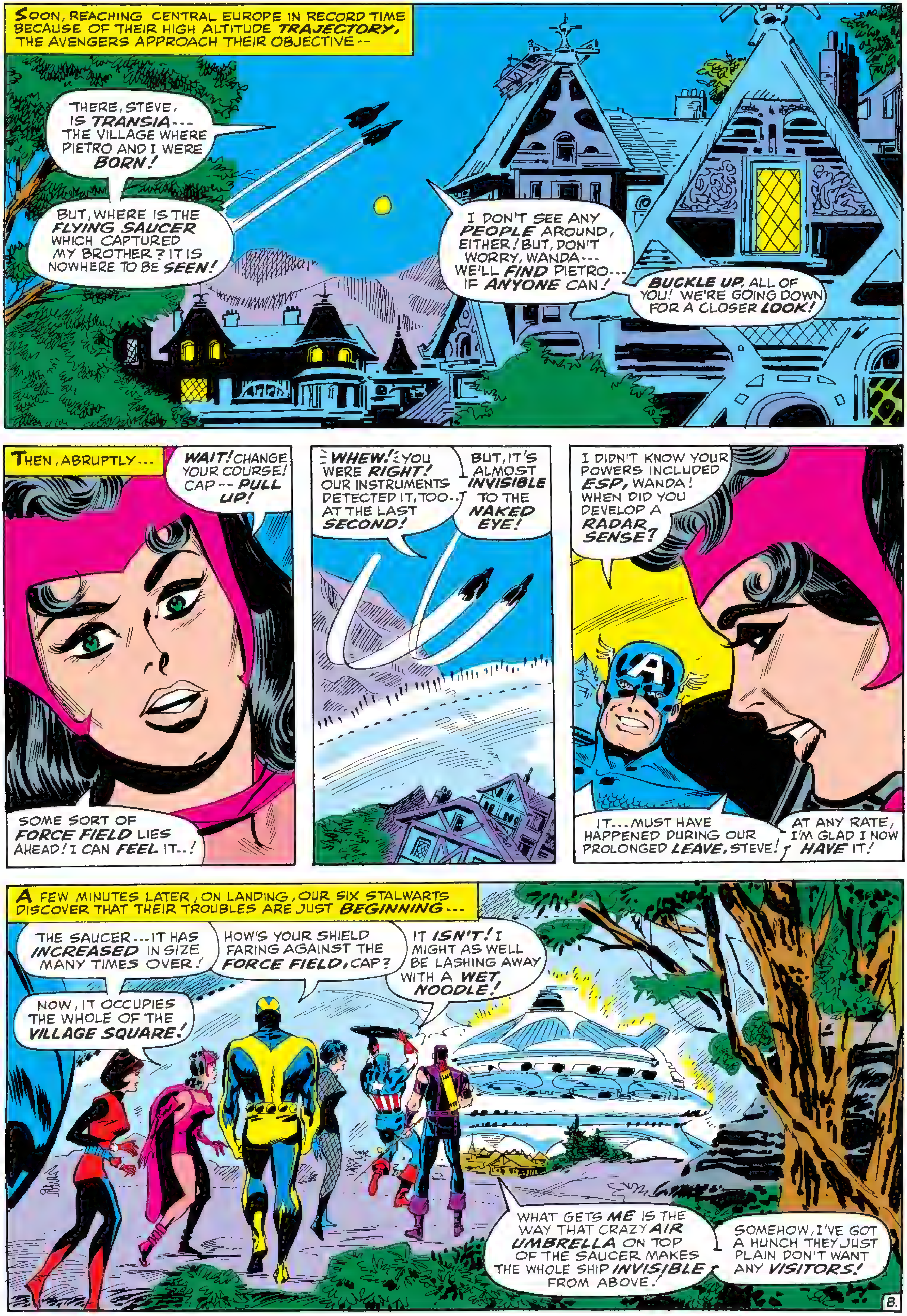

"THE NEXT MOMENT, ALL EYES WERE RIVETED TO THE **HEAVENS**, WHERE THEY BEHELD...!"
MMMMMMMMMMM
A **FLYING SAUCER**--- SUCH AS MANY PEOPLE HAVE SEEN IN THE **UNITED STATES!**
BUT, IT IS **DESCENDING**-- AT A FRIGHTENING, UNBELIEVABLE **SPEED!**
PIETRO--- **LOOK!** CAN IT BE **LANDING?**
"AND, MY WORST FEARS WERE **FULFILLED** ALMOST AT ONCE, AS THE UNEARTHLY DISC CAME TO REST NOT FAR AWAY."
MMMMMMMMMM
"THEN, AS A **METALLIC ENCLOSURE** WAS LOWERED FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE SHIP, THE STRANGE HUMMING SOUND **CEASED!**"
WANDA, THERE MAY BE **DANGER!** WAIT HERE, WHILE I---
SAY NO MORE, MY BROTHER! ALREADY, I KNOW THE WORDS THAT ARE IN YOUR **HEART!**
BUT, THE **SCARLET WITCH** IS AS MUCH AN AVENGER AS IS **QUICKSILVER**--- AND I WON'T BE LEFT **BEHIND!**
COME, THEN! THERE IS NO TIME TO **WASTE!**
A **FLYING SAUCER**-- IN THIS SMALL VILLAGE! IT'S **INCREDIBLE!!**
"IT WAS WITH A FEELING OF EAGERNESS--- ALMOST OF **EXHILARATION**--- THAT I DONNED MY CRIMSON COSTUME ONCE AGAIN--- AND, WITHIN SECONDS, WE APPROACHED THE SILENT, UNMOVING SAUCER---"
OBSERVE--- THERE IS A **DOOR** IN THE CYLINDER DIRECTLY BELOW THE SHIP!
YET, EVEN AS I SPEAK, IT STARTS TO **CLOSE!** FOLLOW AT A SAFE DISTANCE, WANDA--
I MUST SEE WHAT LIES **INSIDE!**
NO-- DO NOT GO **ALONE!**
I DO WHAT I **MUST!** FOR, IF I **WAIT** FOR YOU, WE COULD NEVER REACH THE SHIP IN **TIME!**
BUT, IF I DO NOT **RETURN**, TELL THE **AVENGERS** WHAT HAS BEFALLEN ME!
PIETRO! YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT **POWER** YOU MIGHT BE FACING--- OR ITS **PURPOSE!**
IT'S **NO USE!** --HE IS **GONE!**

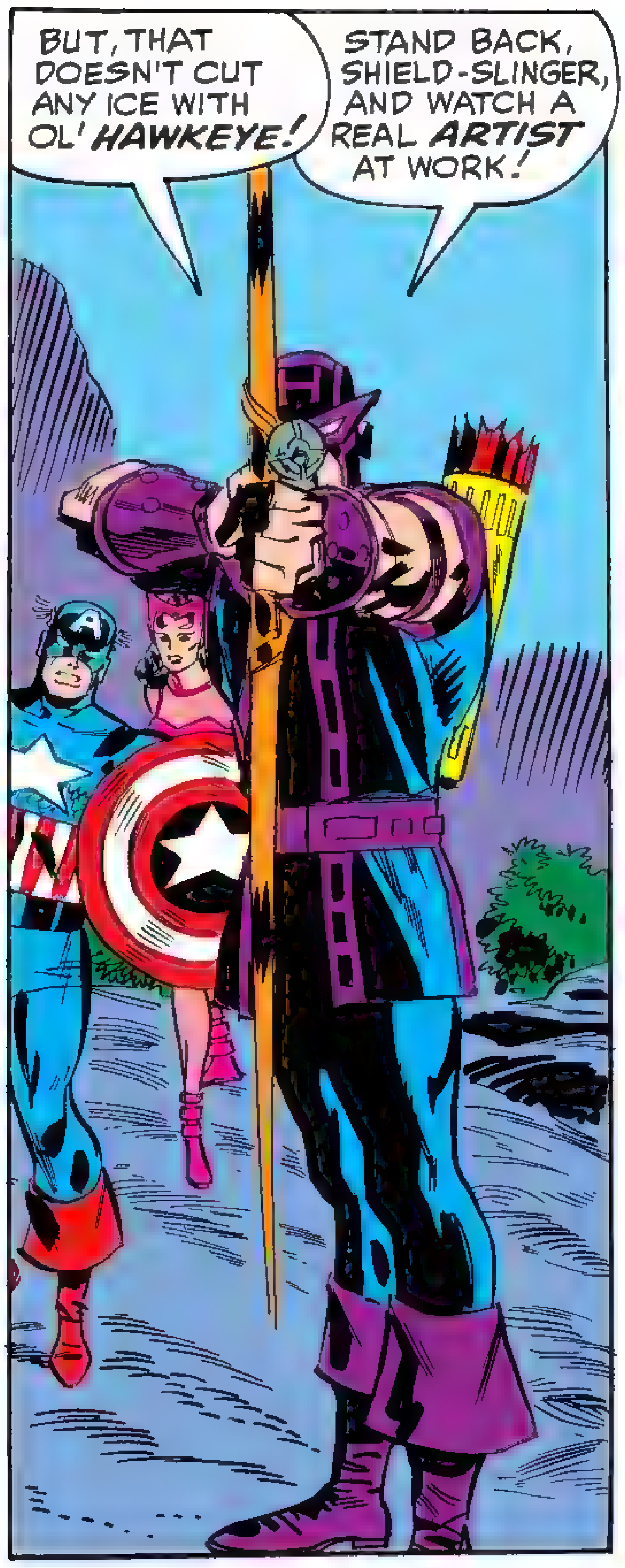

"THEN, AS I HURRIED TOWARDS THE GLEAMING SAUCER.."
THERE --- AHEAD OF ME! CAN IT BE?!!
LOOK OUT! THE DOORWAY CLOSES BEHIND YOU!
WANDA.. BRING THE AVENGERS.. AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!
ONLY THEY CAN COPE WITH WHAT I SEE INSIDE THE SHIP!
"A HEARTBEAT LATER..."
THE ENTRANCE.. IT HAS CLOSED!
AND..PIETRO IS INSIDE... A PRISONER!
BUT... A PRISONER... OF WHOM?
MY ONE RECOURSE ...IS TO USE MY HEX POWER!
IF ONLY IT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO DAMAGE THE SAUCER--!
"HOWEVER, TO MY DISMAY..."
IT HAS NO EFFECT! YET, I KNOW THAT MY POWER IS AS MIGHTY AS EVER!
WHAT STRANGE CRAFT IS THIS.. THAT DEFIES MY HEX AS IF IT WERE A CHILD'S PLAYTHING?
"AGAIN AND AGAIN, I HURLED MY BLASTS AT THE UNYIELDING METAL, UNTIL..."
GETTING... WEAKER! BUT, I JUST CAN'T GIVE UP! MUST KEEP TRYING...
"FINALLY, THE STRAIN PROVED TOO GREAT FOR ME TO BEAR ANY LONGER, AND ---
CAN'T GO ON! THE STRAIN--- WOULD MAKE ME BLACK OUT--- AND THEN I, TOO, MIGHT BE TAKEN PRISONER!
THAT MUST NOT HAPPEN! I AM PIETRO'S ONLY CHANCE FOR RESCUE!
WHAT IF HE IS A CAPTIVE OF--CREATURES FROM ANOTHER WORLD?!!
"AND SO, WITH A HEAVY HEART, I TURNED FROM THE SAUCER, AS..."
THE VILLAGERS WILL BE OF NO HELP TO ME! I MUST CONTACT THE AVENGERS-- AT ONCE!
WHAT I COULD NOT DO ALONE--- WE SHALL HAVE TO ACCOMPLISH AS A TEAM!

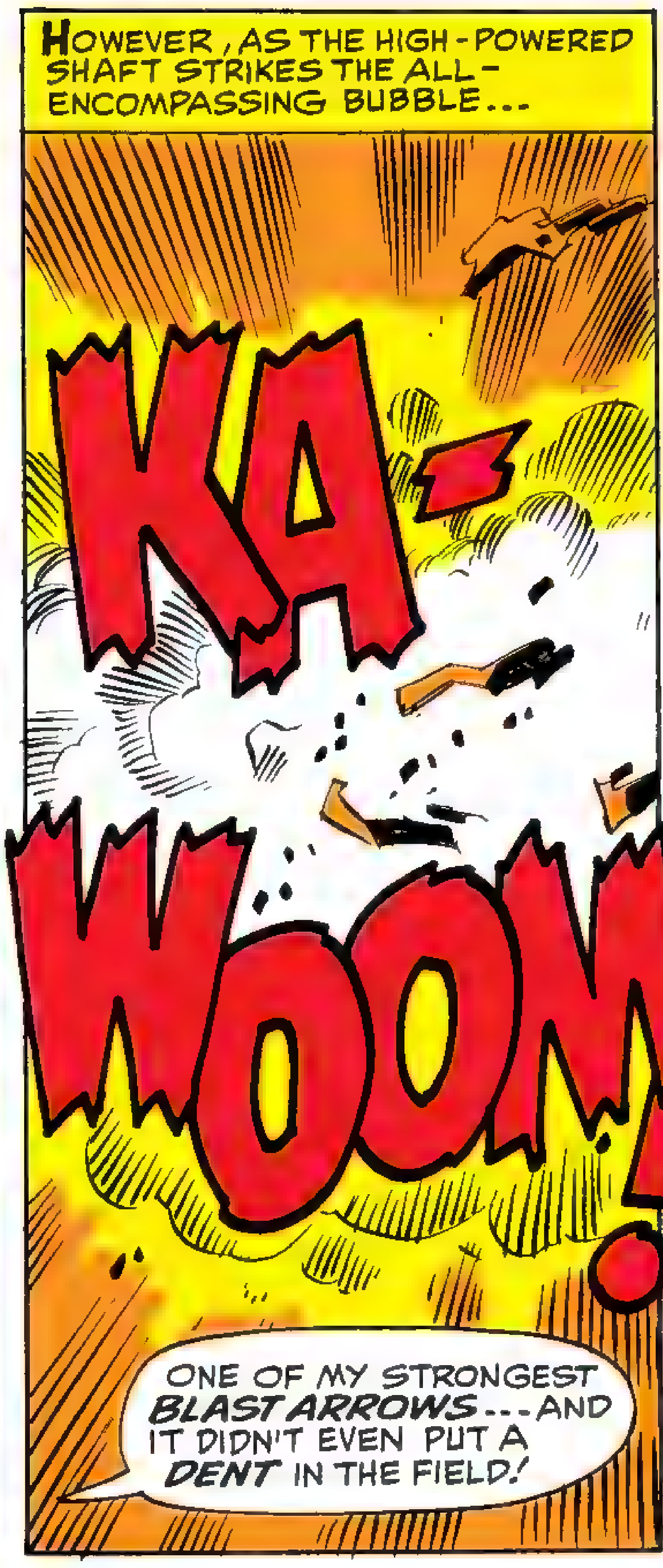

I TRIED TO CONTACT YOU ON OUR SPECIAL FREQUENCY... BUT THERE WAS NO ANSWER!
LUCKILY, I WAS ABLE TO USE MY AVENGERS PRIORITY TO OBTAIN AN INTERCONTINENTAL JET... AND RUSHED HERE AS QUICKLY AS I COULD!
WE RETURNED ONLY HOURS AGO FROM LATIN AMERICA! YOU MUST HAVE TRIED TO CONTACT US JUST BEFORE THAT!
BUT NOW, I'LL SUMMON THE OTHER AVENGERS... AT ONCE!
THUS, A SHORT TIME LATER.. TWO COSTUMED FIGURES MAKE THE SCENE, AND...
HIYA, WING-HEAD! NATASHA AND I WERE JUST GETTIN' SET TO SPLIT A PIZZA WHEN YOUR CALL CAME THROUGH!
WHAT'S THE BIG EMERGENCY... YA FIND A RUST-SPOT ON YOUR SHIELD AND NEED SOMEBODY TO POLISH IT FOR YA?
THIS IS SERIOUS AVENGER BUSINESS, HAWKEYE! PIETRO'S BEEN CAPTURED.. AND WE'VE GOT TO FREE HIM!
AVENGER BUSINESS? THEN.. PERHAPS I SHOULD NOT HAVE COME!
NEVER MIND, 'TASHA, BABY... JUST LET OL' HAWKEYE HANDLE THIS!
I BROUGHT THE BLACK WIDOW WITH ME, CAP, BECAUSE I THINK IT'S HIGH TIME SHE WAS ADMITTED TO MEMBERSHIP!
THAT'S NOT FOR US TO DECIDE, AVENGER! WE'D HAVE TO CALL A SPECIAL MEETING TO VOTE ON IT!
AND, WE'RE TOO BUSY TO THINK ABOUT HER CANDIDACY NOW!
WELL, I'M NOT TOO BUSY... AND I VOTE NO!
GOLIATH!
HANK, PLEASE! CAN'T WE DISCUSS IT AFTER WE FIND OUT WHY CAP SUMMONED US HERE?
SORRY, JAN, BUT THERE'S NOTHING TO DISCUSS!
IT WAS ONLY WEEKS AGO THAT THE BLACK WIDOW LED POWER MAN AND THE SWORDSMAN AGAINST US!*
WHAT'S HAWKEYE WANT... FOR US TO GIVE HER A MEDAL?
LISTEN TO THE BIG MAN! HE GETS BACK TO NORMAL SIZE 'N HE'S SPOLIN' FOR A FIGHT!
EASY, PARTNER! REMEMBER ...YOU'VE GOT QUITE A TEMPER YOURSELF!
JUST THE SAME, THAT OVER-SIZED LUNK-HEAD BETTER LAY OFF! HE'S NOT RUNNIN' THE WHOLE SHOW!
*YOU THRILLED TO THAT EPIC IN AVENGERS #29... OR, AT LEAST, WE HOPE YOU DID! ... INSECURE STAN.

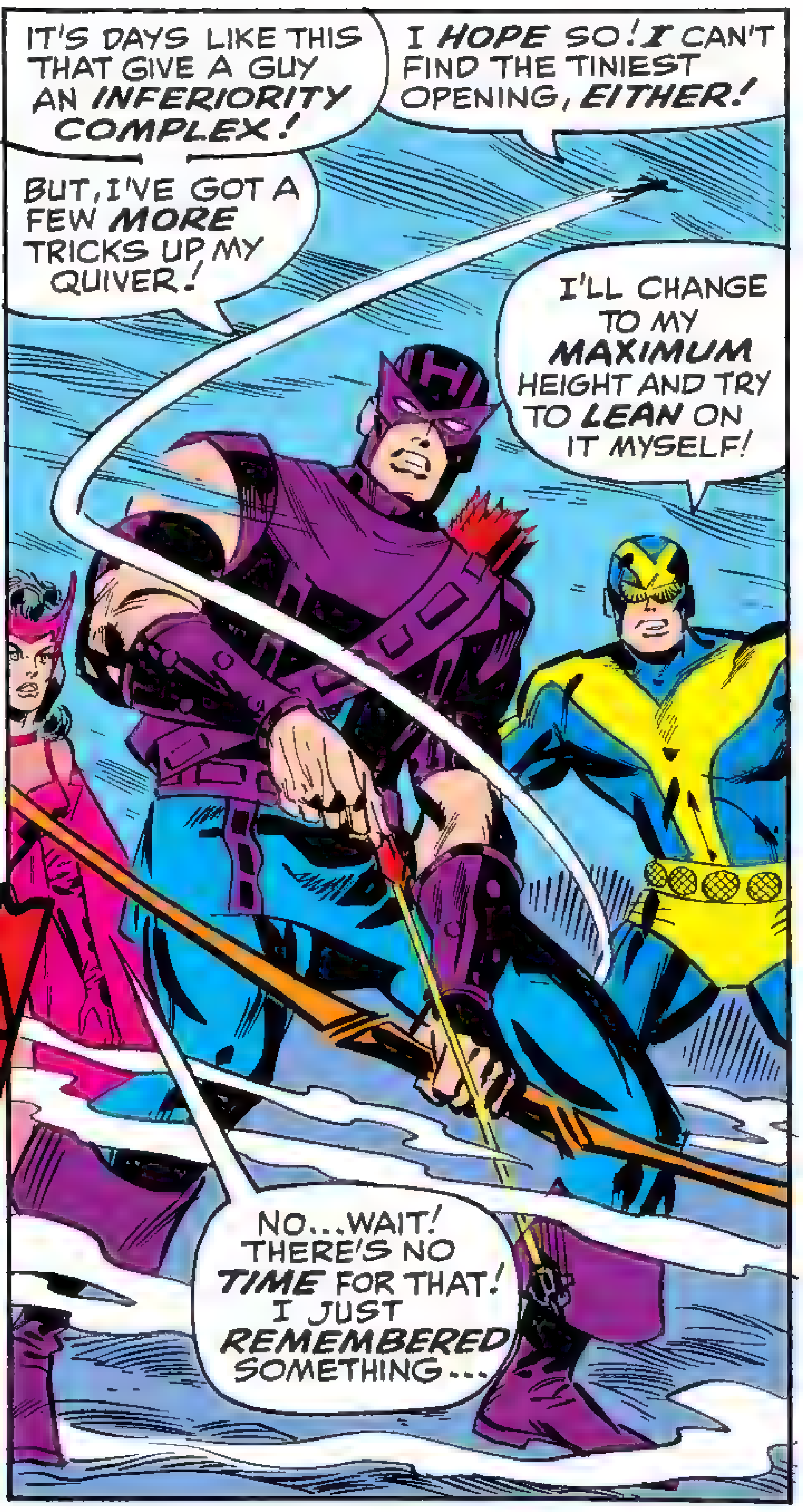

HE HAS A **POINT,** HANK! THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO GET SO **UPSET!**
PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, JAN... WE'LL TAKE THE WHOLE MATTER UP SOME **OTHER** TIME!
JUST THE SAME, AS ONE OF THE **ORIGINAL** AVENGERS, I DON'T CARE TOO SEE IT TURN INTO A **REST HOME** FOR **REFORMED SUPER-VILLAINS!**
GOLIATH, I'VE HAD IT UP TO **HERE** WITH YOUR HARPIN' ABOUT HOW **LONG** YOU'VE BEEN AN AVENGER!
WHAT **I** WANNA KNOW IS, WHERE WERE YOU FOR THOSE BLASTED **MONTHS** THAT THE REST OF US WERE KEEPIN' THE AVENGERS FROM BEIN' JUST A NAME IN A **HISTORY BOOK?**
YOU TALK PRETTY **BIG,** FOR A GUY WHO SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME TAKIN' **VACATIONS!**
WHY, YOU TWO-BIT **WILLIAM TELL!** I WAS TAKING ON BADDIES LIKE **COLOSSUS** WHEN YOU WERE RUNNIN' AROUND IN SHORT PANTS, MAKING TROUBLE FOR **IRON MAN!**
AND SINCE YOU'RE STRINGIN' YOUR **BOW,** I MAY AS WELL MAKE MYSELF A **BIGGER TARGET!**
MISTER, I WOULDN'T CARE IF YOU MADE YOURSELF SO **SMALL** COULD HIDE BEHIND ONE OF YOUR CRUMMY **ANTS!**
THE TARGET AIN'T BEEN **MADE** THAT HAWKEYE CAN'T **HIT!**
BUT, JUST AS THE POWERFUL PAIR PREPARE TO **CLASH...**
NOW HOLD IT RIGHT **THERE,** HENRY PYM!
ENOUGH IS **ENOUGH!** CAP DIDN'T SEND OUT AN EMERGENCY CALL JUST SO YOU TWO COULD **ROUGH-HOUSE!**
MAYBE **NOT** BUT I'M TIRED OF THAT REFUGEE FROM A ROBIN HOOD MOVIE THROWIN' HIS **WEIGHT** AROUND JUST BECAUSE HE CAN SHOOT A FEW **ARROWS!**
IF IT'S MY **ARCHERY** THAT'S BOTHERIN' YA, BIG MAN, I'LL BE GLAD TO **DUKE IT OUT** WITH YA-- ANY TIME YOU **SAY!**
COOL OFF, HAWKEYE! WE'VE ALL BEEN UNDER A **STRAIN** LATELY, BATTLING THE **LIVING LASER!** LET'S NOT TAKE IT OUT ON **EACH OTHER!**
YOU **CALLED** IT, CAP! JUST KEEP THAT JOKER OFF MY **BACK!**
ONE OF THESE DAYS, BIG MOUTH, CAP WON'T BE AROUND TO **PROTECT** YOU!

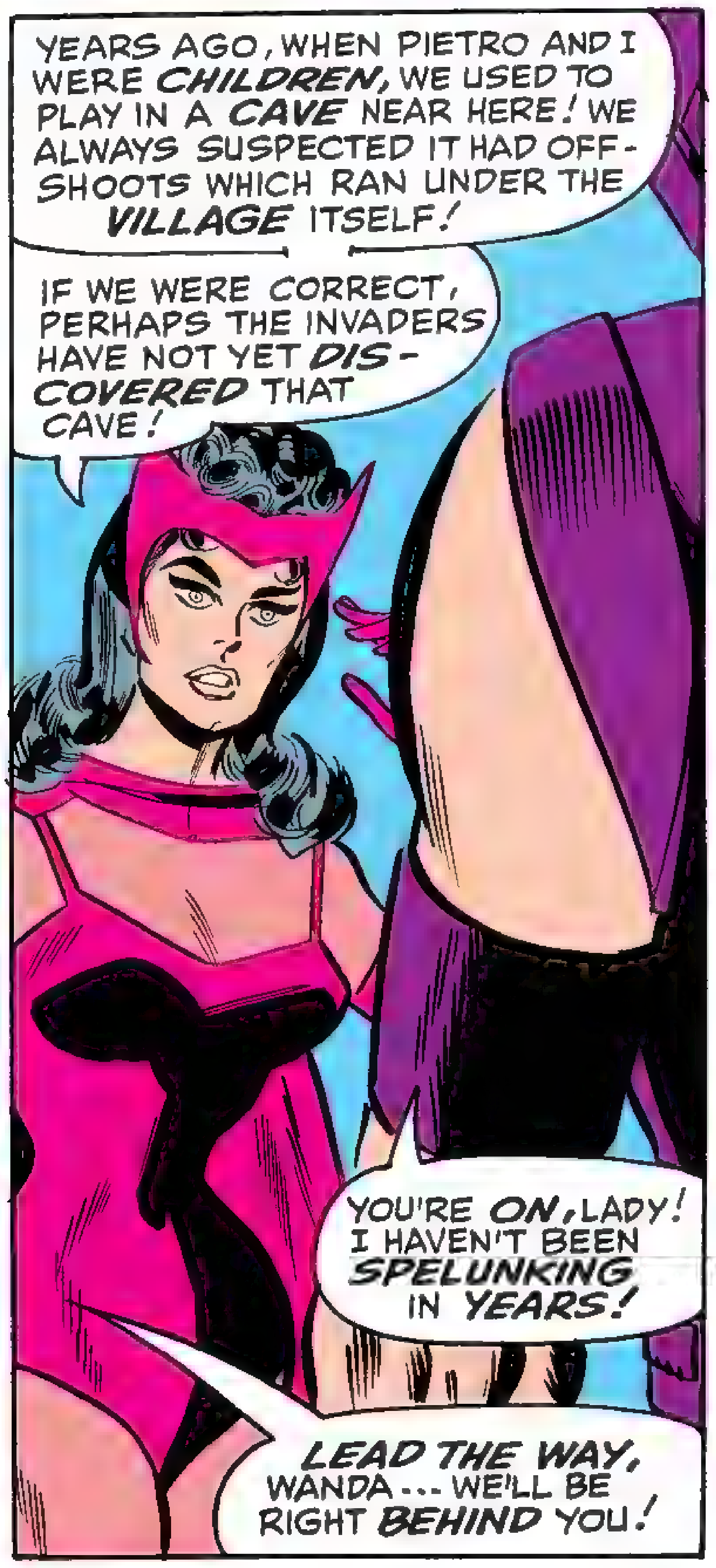

AND THEN, AS THE NOW CALMER-TEMPERED GOLIATH USES A BURST OF MENTAL CONCENTRATION TO SHRINK TO HIS NORMAL HEIGHT, A STRIDENT, ANGRY VOICE RINGS OUT...
IS THIS HOW YOU WELCOME A RETURNING AVENGER, ALL OF YOU?
CAN YOU DO NOTHING BUT ARGUE, WHILE MY BROTHER IS IN MORTAL PERIL AN OCEAN AWAY?
PIETRO...IN DANGER?
THAT'S WHAT THE LADY'S BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU, HANK!
TIME GROWS SHORT! EVEN NOW, THE SAUCER MAY HAVE DEPARTED!
WILL YOU ACCOMPANY ME FROM WHENCE I CAME, OR MUST I RETURN ALONE?
YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT, WANDA!
NOW I DON'T WANNA HEAR ANOTHER PEEP OUT OF ANYONE! AN AVENGER'S IN TROUBLE--AND WE'RE GONNA HELP HIM!
WE READ YOU, CAP! LET'S GET GOING!
OKAY! INTO OUR AERO-CARS, EVERYONE! WANDA CAN FILL US IN ON THE DETAILS AS WE HEAD FOR EUROPE!
THUS IT IS THAT, LESS THAN SIXTY SECONDS LATER, TWIN ENGINES OF A HIGHLY COMPLEX DESIGN BURST INTO EAR-SHATTERING LIFE---
RROARRRR
---AND ZOOM WITH BLINDING, SUPERSONIC SPEED INTO THE SUB-STRATOSPHERE, AS ALL PASSENGERS FERVENTLY HOPE THEY WILL NOT BE--TOO LATE!
WROOOOM!
QUICKSILVER IS NO PUSHOVER---HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE ANY HOSTILE FORCE ON BOARD THAT SAUCER WITH HIS SUPER-SPEED!
BUT, IF ANYTHING HAS HAPPENED TO HIM, HERE'S WHERE THE AVENGERS SHOW HOW THEY EARNED THEIR NAME---IN SPADES!
STILL, WE'VE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHO--OR WHAT HE MAY BE FACING!
IF THE SAUCER IS REALLY FROM OUTER SPACE--NO, LET'S NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT THAT!
7.

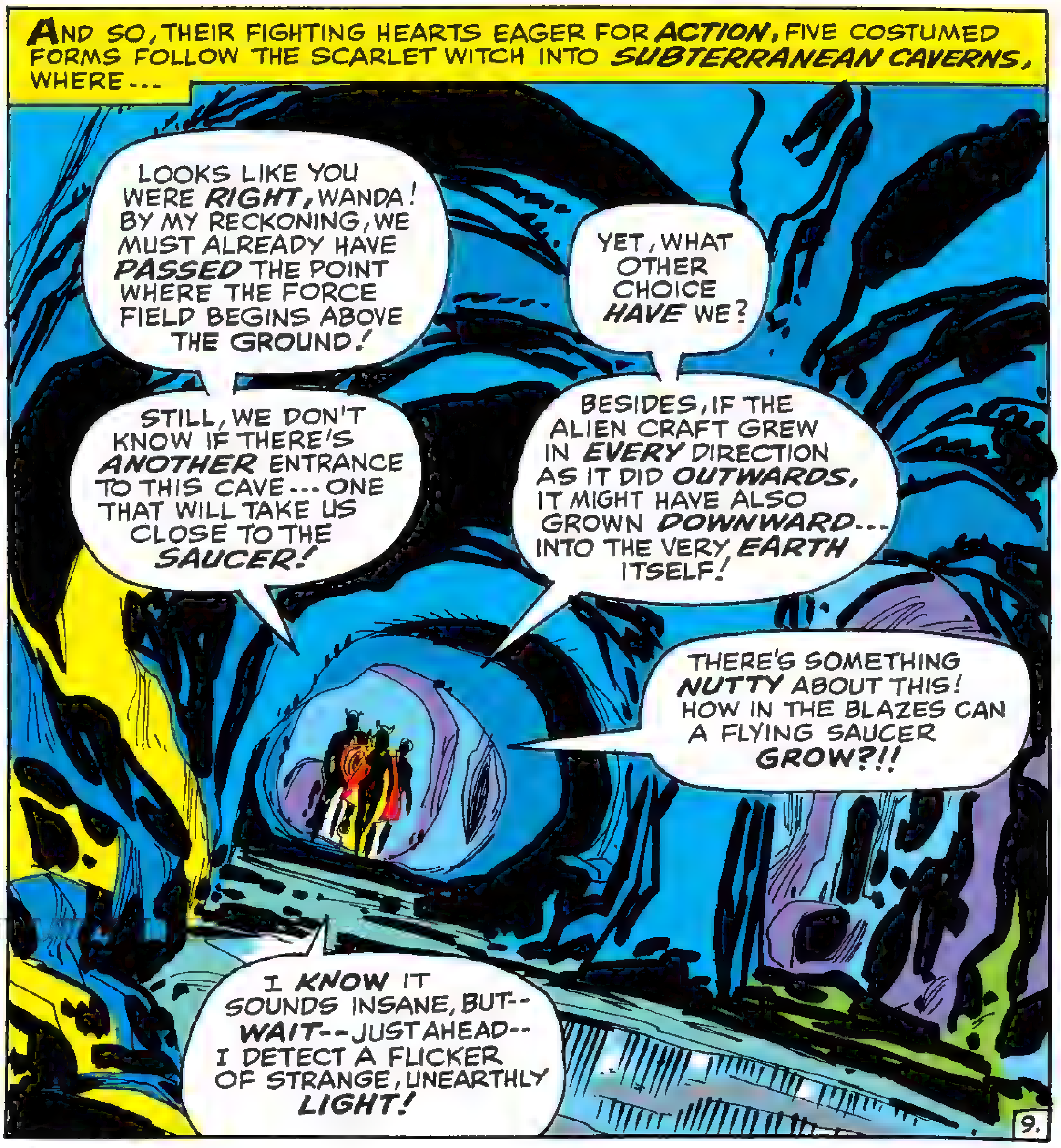

SOON, REACHING CENTRAL EUROPE IN RECORD TIME BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGH ALTITUDE *TRAJECTORY*, THE AVENGERS APPROACH THEIR OBJECTIVE--
THERE, STEVE, IS *TRANSIA*... THE VILLAGE WHERE PIETRO AND I WERE *BORN!*
BUT, WHERE IS THE *FLYING SAUCER* WHICH CAPTURED MY BROTHER? IT IS NOWHERE TO BE *SEEN!*
I DON'T SEE ANY *PEOPLE* AROUND, EITHER! BUT, DON'T WORRY, WANDA... WE'LL *FIND* PIETRO... IF *ANYONE* CAN!
BUCKLE UP, ALL OF YOU! WE'RE GOING DOWN FOR A CLOSER *LOOK!*
THEN, ABRUPTLY...
WAIT! CHANGE YOUR COURSE! CAP -- *PULL UP!*
SOME SORT OF *FORCE FIELD* LIES AHEAD! I CAN *FEEL* IT..!
WHEW! YOU WERE *RIGHT!* OUR INSTRUMENTS DETECTED IT, TOO.. AT THE LAST *SECOND!*
BUT, IT'S ALMOST *INVISIBLE* TO THE *NAKED EYE!*
I DIDN'T KNOW YOUR POWERS INCLUDED *ESP*, WANDA! WHEN DID YOU DEVELOP A *RADAR SENSE?*
IT... MUST HAVE HAPPENED DURING OUR PROLONGED *LEAVE*, STEVE!
AT ANY RATE, I'M GLAD I NOW *HAVE* IT!
A FEW MINUTES LATER, ON LANDING, OUR SIX STALWARTS DISCOVER THAT THEIR TROUBLES ARE JUST *BEGINNING*...
THE SAUCER... IT HAS *INCREASED* IN SIZE MANY TIMES OVER!
NOW, IT OCCUPIES THE WHOLE OF THE *VILLAGE SQUARE!*
HOW'S YOUR SHIELD FARING AGAINST THE *FORCE FIELD*, CAP?
IT *ISN'T!* I MIGHT AS WELL BE LASHING AWAY WITH A *WET NOODLE!*
WHAT GETS *ME* IS THE WAY THAT CRAZY *AIR UMBRELLA* ON TOP OF THE SAUCER MAKES THE WHOLE SHIP *INVISIBLE* FROM ABOVE!
SOMEHOW, I'VE GOT A HUNCH THEY JUST PLAIN DON'T WANT ANY *VISITORS!*
8.

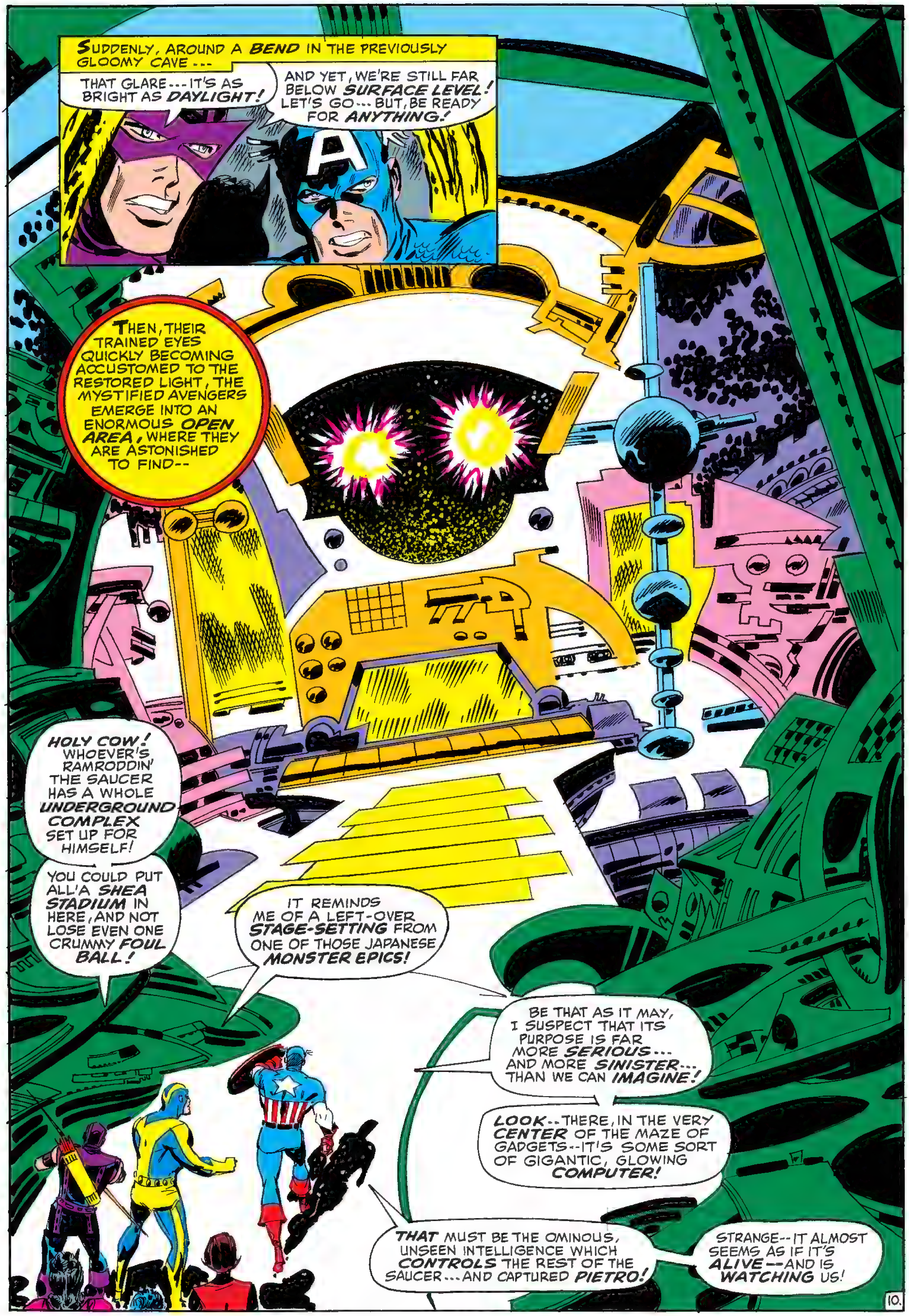

BUT, THAT DOESN'T CUT ANY ICE WITH OL' **HAWKEYE!**
STAND BACK, SHIELD-SLINGER, AND WATCH A REAL **ARTIST** AT WORK!

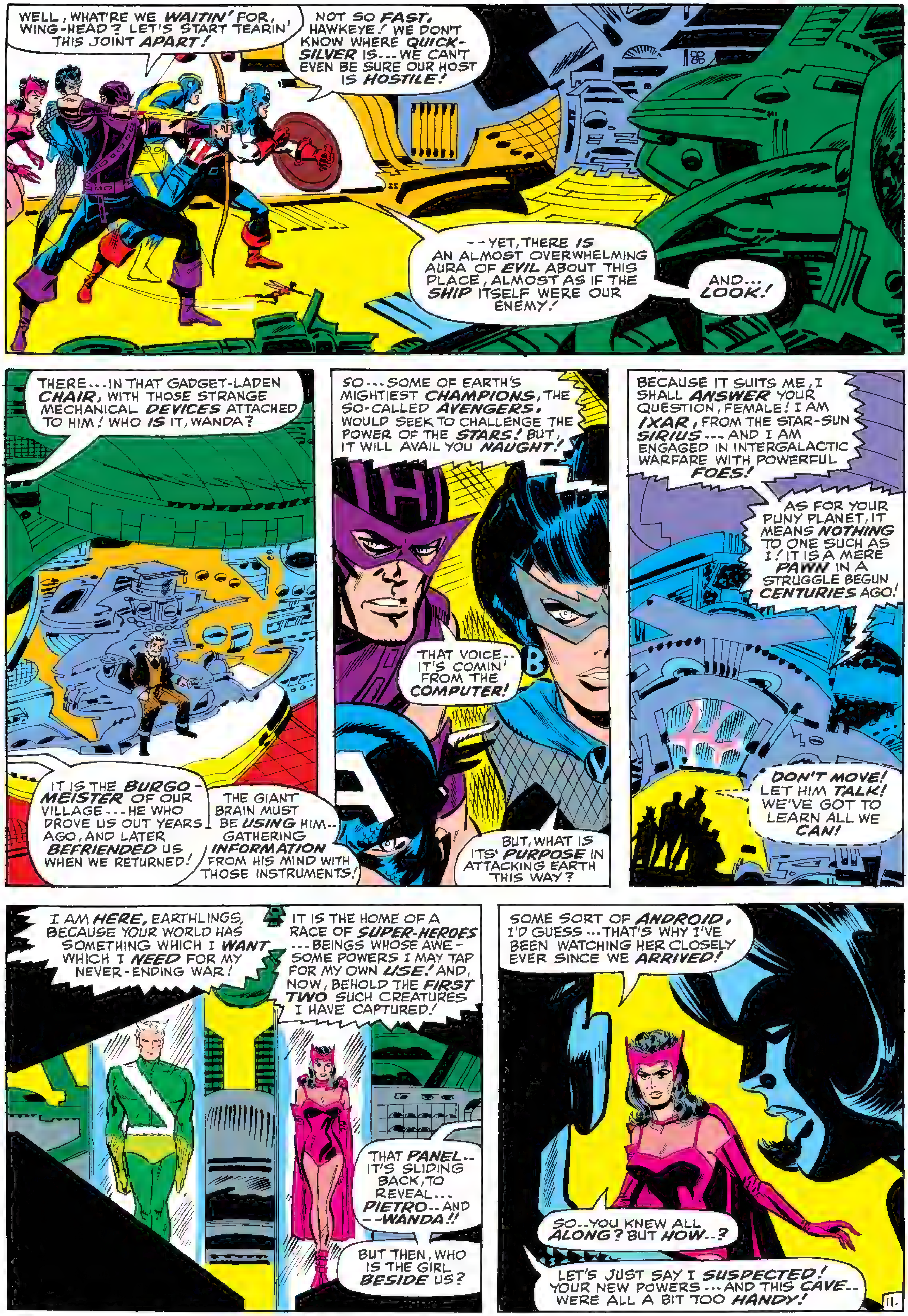

HOWEVER, AS THE HIGH-POWERED SHAFT STRIKES THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING BUBBLE...
KA-WOOM!
ONE OF MY STRONGEST **BLAST ARROWS**...AND IT DIDN'T EVEN PUT A **DENT** IN THE FIELD!

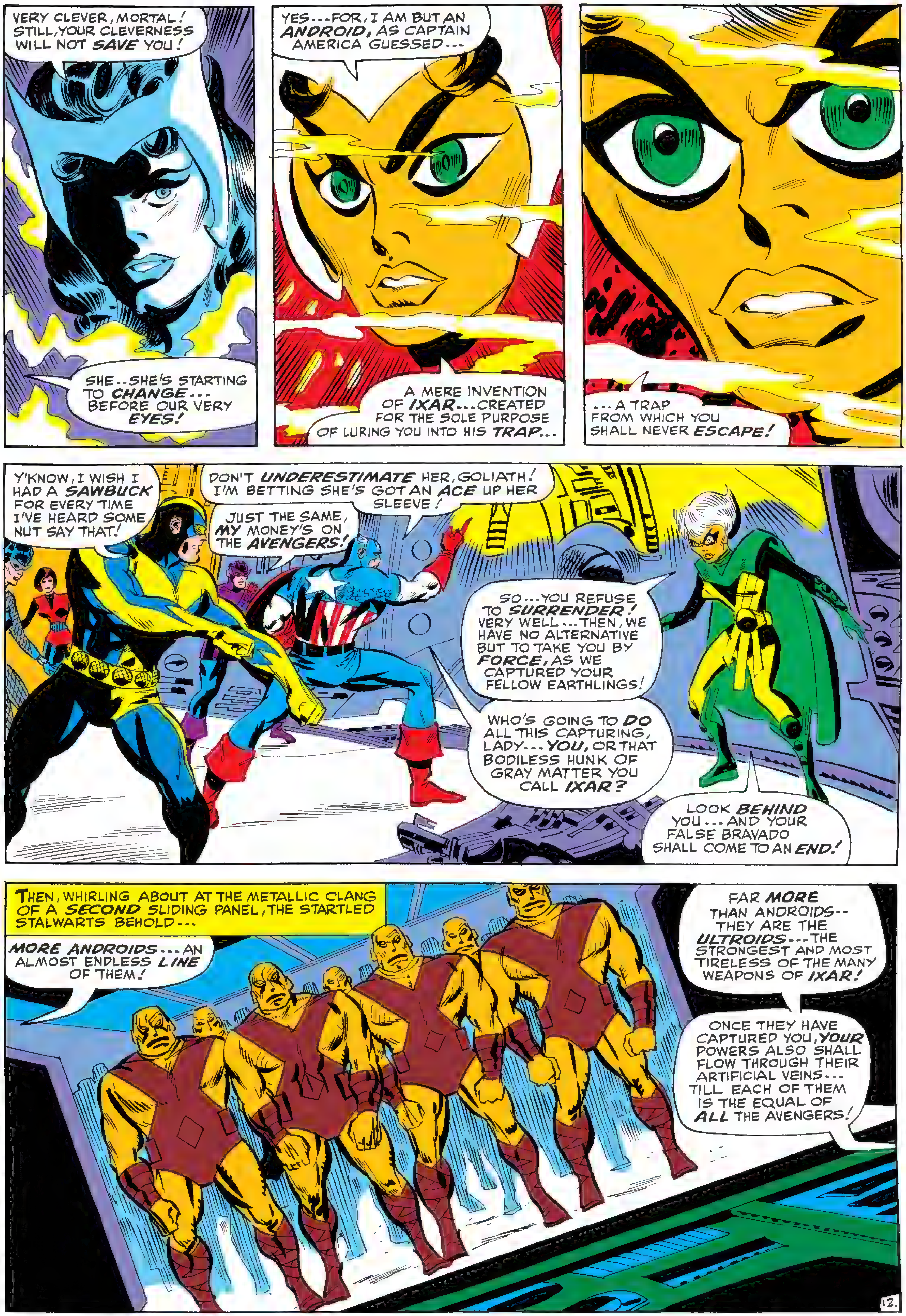

IT'S DAYS LIKE THIS THAT GIVE A GUY AN **INFERIORITY COMPLEX!**
I **HOPE** SO! **I** CAN'T FIND THE TINIEST OPENING, **EITHER!**
BUT, I'VE GOT A FEW **MORE** TRICKS UP MY QUIVER!
I'LL CHANGE TO MY **MAXIMUM** HEIGHT AND TRY TO **LEAN** ON IT MYSELF!
NO...WAIT! THERE'S NO **TIME** FOR THAT! I JUST **REMEMBERED** SOMETHING...

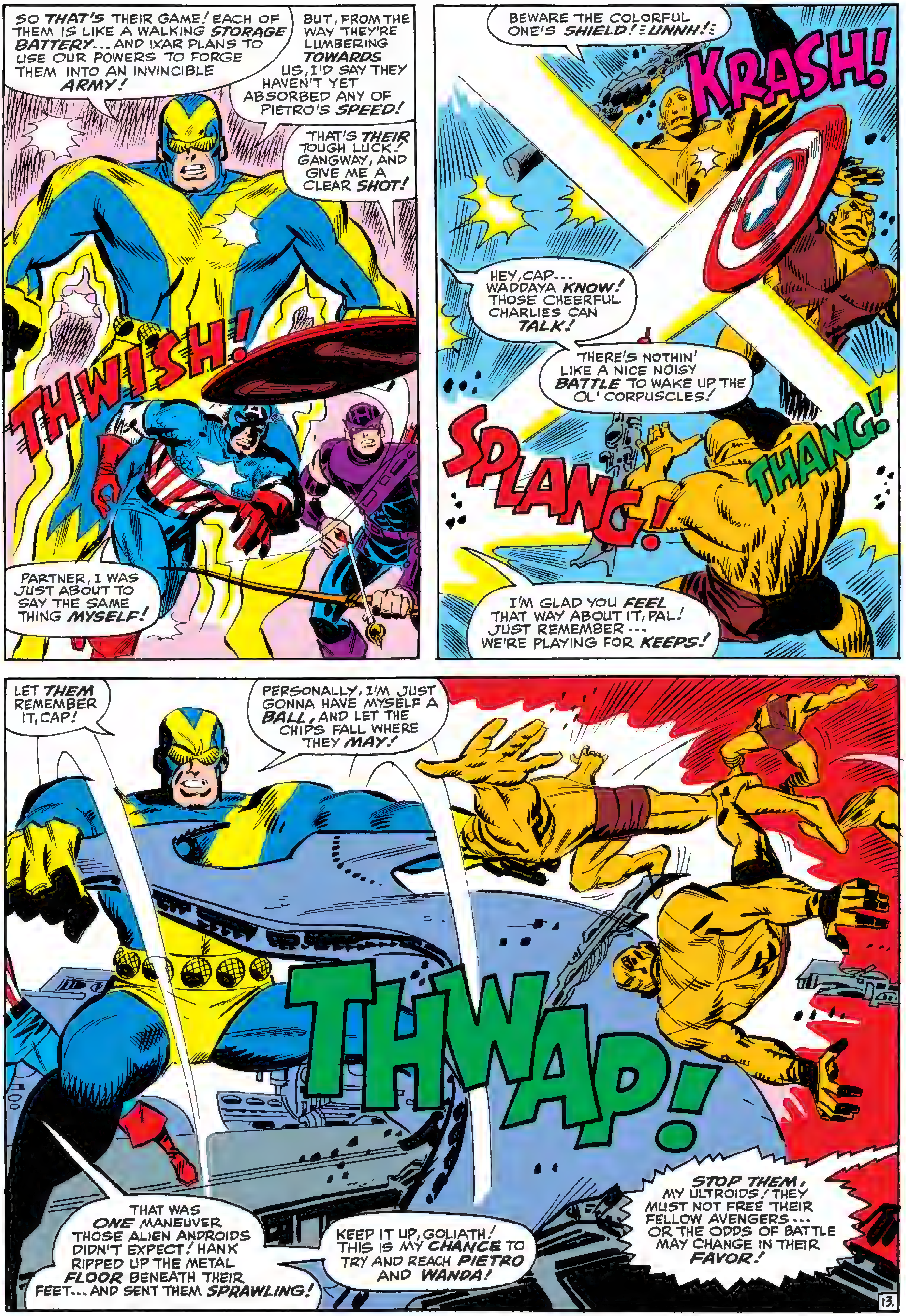

YEARS AGO, WHEN PIETRO AND I WERE **CHILDREN,** WE USED TO PLAY IN A **CAVE** NEAR HERE! WE ALWAYS SUSPECTED IT HAD OFF-SHOOTS WHICH RAN UNDER THE **VILLAGE** ITSELF!
IF WE WERE CORRECT, PERHAPS THE INVADERS HAVE NOT YET **DISCOVERED** THAT CAVE!
YOU'RE **ON,** LADY! I HAVEN'T BEEN **SPELUNKING** IN **YEARS!**
LEAD THE WAY, WANDA... WE'LL BE RIGHT **BEHIND** YOU!

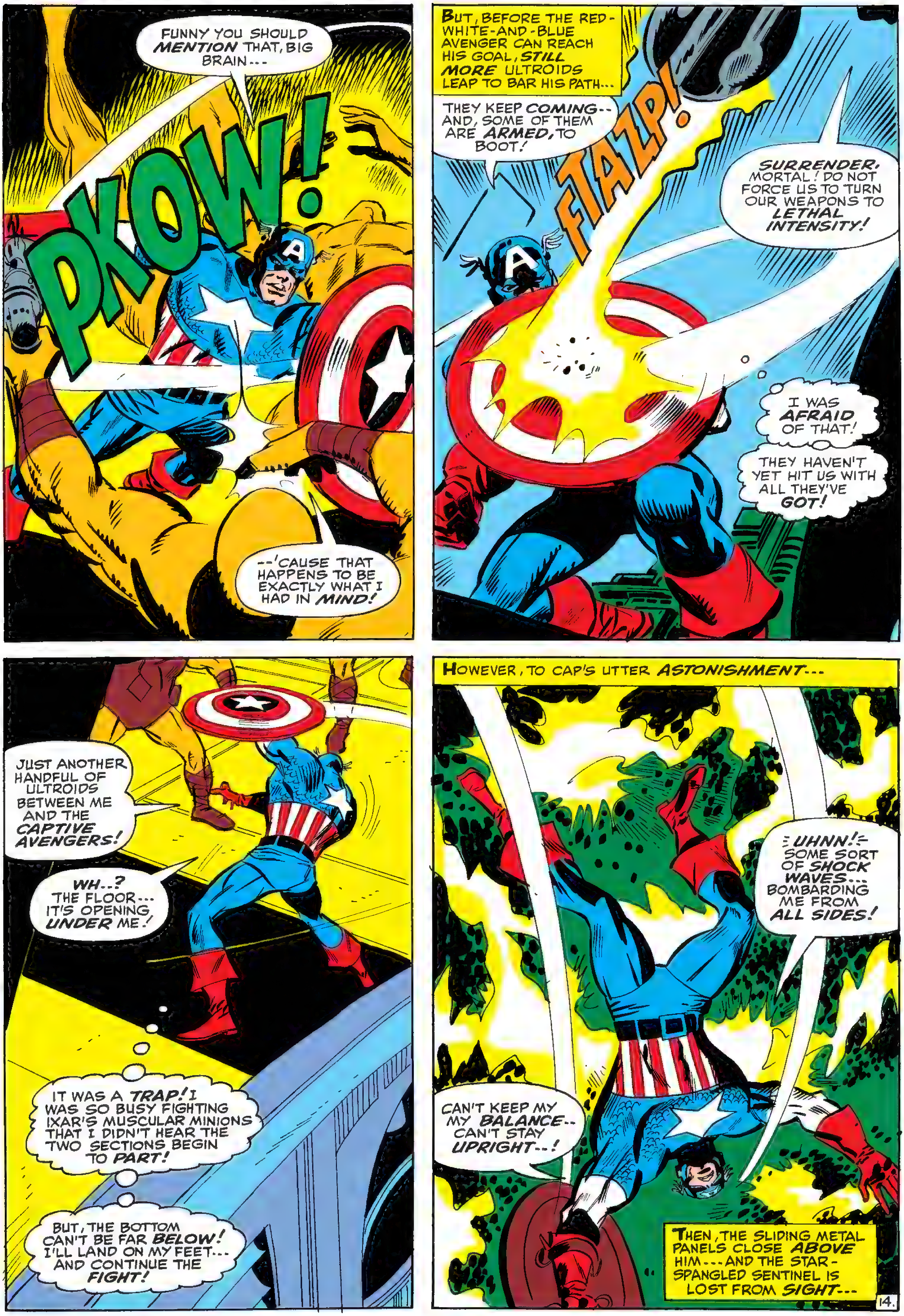

AND SO, THEIR FIGHTING HEARTS EAGER FOR **ACTION,** FIVE COSTUMED FORMS FOLLOW THE SCARLET WITCH INTO **SUBTERRANEAN CAVERNS,** WHERE...
LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE **RIGHT,** WANDA! BY MY RECKONING, WE MUST ALREADY HAVE **PASSED** THE POINT WHERE THE FORCE FIELD BEGINS ABOVE THE GROUND!
YET, WHAT OTHER CHOICE **HAVE** WE?
STILL, WE DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S **ANOTHER** ENTRANCE TO THIS CAVE...ONE THAT WILL TAKE US CLOSE TO THE **SAUCER!**
BESIDES, IF THE ALIEN CRAFT GREW IN **EVERY** DIRECTION AS IT DID **OUTWARDS,** IT MIGHT HAVE ALSO GROWN **DOWNWARD**... INTO THE VERY **EARTH** ITSELF!
THERE'S SOMETHING **NUTTY** ABOUT THIS! HOW IN THE BLAZES CAN A FLYING SAUCER **GROW?!!**
I **KNOW** IT SOUNDS INSANE, BUT-- **WAIT**--JUST AHEAD-- I DETECT A FLICKER OF STRANGE, UNEARTHLY **LIGHT!**

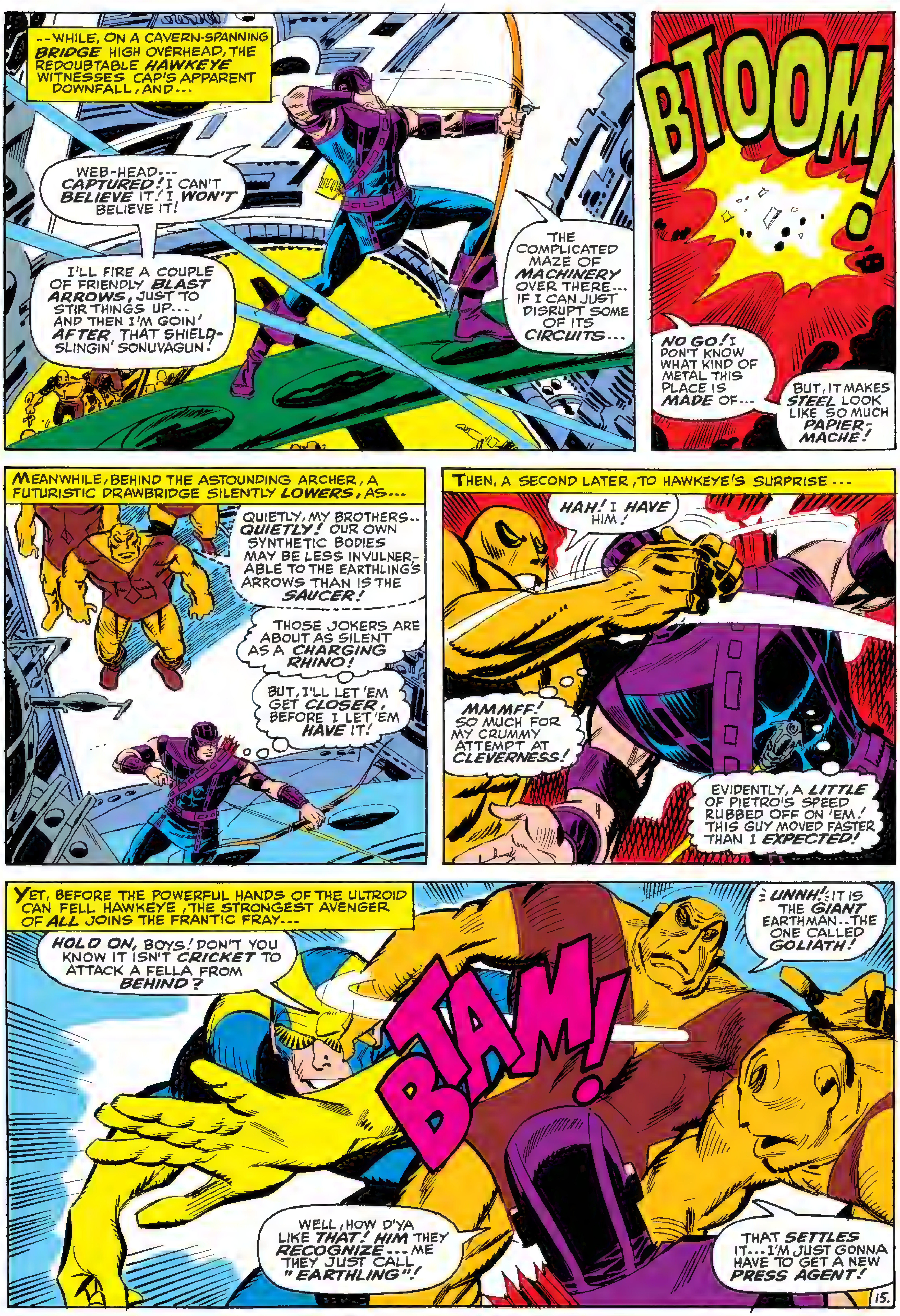

SUDDENLY, AROUND A BEND IN THE PREVIOUSLY GLOOMY CAVE ---
THAT GLARE---IT'S AS BRIGHT AS DAYLIGHT!
AND YET, WE'RE STILL FAR BELOW SURFACE LEVEL! LET'S GO--- BUT, BE READY FOR ANYTHING!
THEN, THEIR TRAINED EYES QUICKLY BECOMING ACCUSTOMED TO THE RESTORED LIGHT, THE MYSTIFIED AVENGERS EMERGE INTO AN ENORMOUS OPEN AREA, WHERE THEY ARE ASTONISHED TO FIND--
HOLY COW! WHOEVER'S RAMRODDIN' THE SAUCER HAS A WHOLE UNDERGROUND COMPLEX SET UP FOR HIMSELF!
YOU COULD PUT ALL'A SHEA STADIUM IN HERE, AND NOT LOSE EVEN ONE CRUMMY FOUL BALL!
IT REMINDS ME OF A LEFT-OVER STAGE-SETTING FROM ONE OF THOSE JAPANESE MONSTER EPICS!
BE THAT AS IT MAY, I SUSPECT THAT ITS PURPOSE IS FAR MORE SERIOUS--- AND MORE SINISTER--- THAN WE CAN IMAGINE!
LOOK--THERE, IN THE VERY CENTER OF THE MAZE OF GADGETS--IT'S SOME SORT OF GIGANTIC, GLOWING COMPUTER!
THAT MUST BE THE OMINOUS, UNSEEN INTELLIGENCE WHICH CONTROLS THE REST OF THE SAUCER--- AND CAPTURED PIETRO!
STRANGE--IT ALMOST SEEMS AS IF IT'S ALIVE --AND IS WATCHING US!

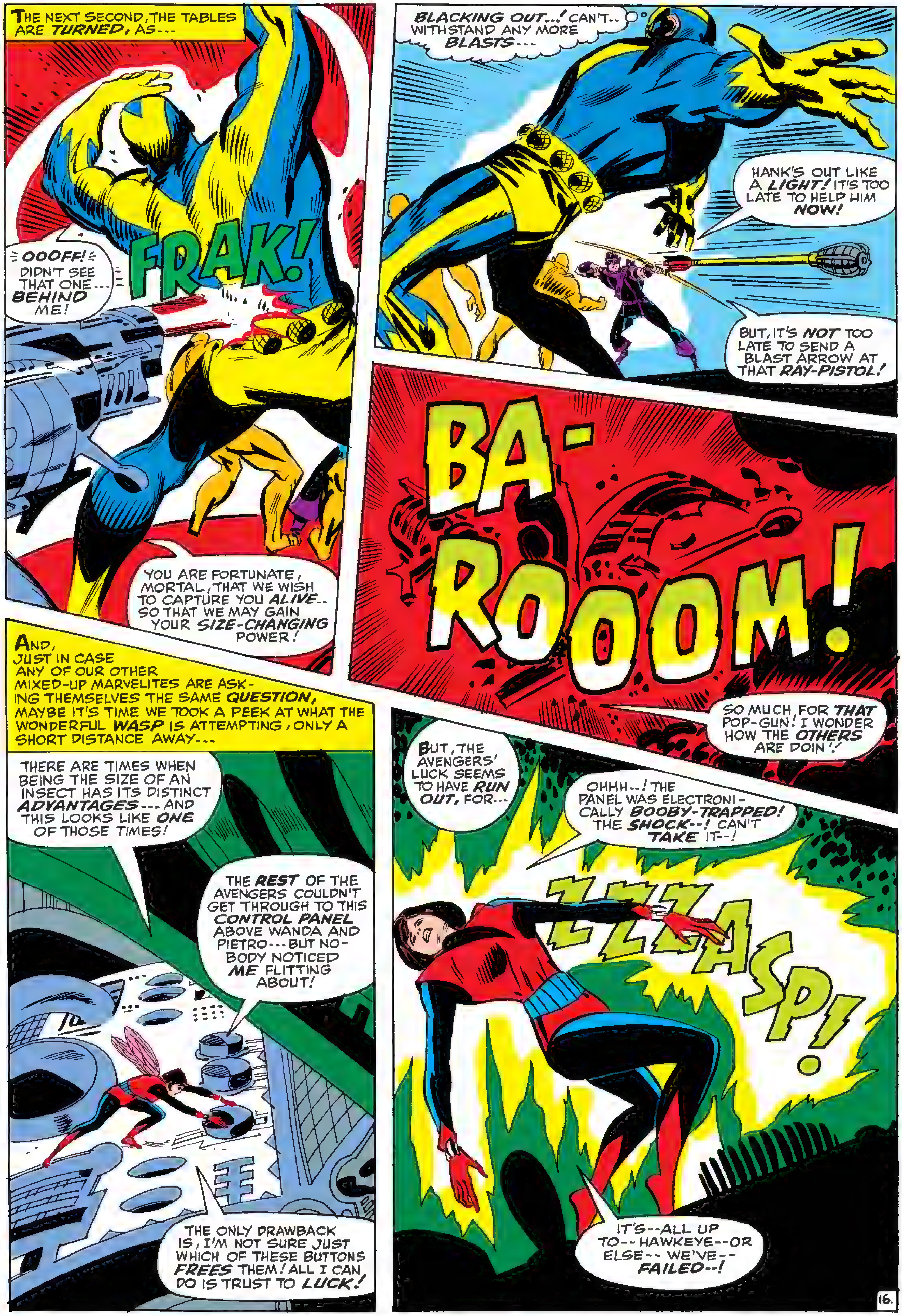

WELL, WHAT'RE WE *WAITIN'* FOR, WING-HEAD? LET'S START TEARIN' THIS JOINT *APART!*
NOT SO *FAST,* HAWKEYE! WE DON'T KNOW WHERE *QUICKSILVER* IS... WE CAN'T EVEN BE SURE OUR HOST IS *HOSTILE!*
--YET, THERE *IS* AN ALMOST OVERWHELMING AURA OF *EVIL* ABOUT THIS PLACE, ALMOST AS IF THE *SHIP* ITSELF WERE OUR ENEMY!
AND... *LOOK!*
THERE... IN THAT GADGET-LADEN *CHAIR,* WITH THOSE STRANGE MECHANICAL *DEVICES* ATTACHED TO HIM! WHO *IS* IT, WANDA?
IT IS THE *BURGOMEISTER* OF OUR VILLAGE--- HE WHO DROVE US OUT YEARS AGO, AND LATER *BEFRIENDED* US WHEN WE RETURNED!
THE GIANT BRAIN MUST BE *USING* HIM-- GATHERING *INFORMATION* FROM HIS MIND WITH THOSE INSTRUMENTS!
SO... SOME OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST *CHAMPIONS,* THE SO-CALLED *AVENGERS,* WOULD SEEK TO CHALLENGE THE POWER OF THE *STARS!* BUT, IT WILL AVAIL YOU *NAUGHT!*
THAT VOICE-- IT'S COMIN' FROM THE *COMPUTER!*
BUT, WHAT IS ITS' *PURPOSE* IN ATTACKING EARTH THIS WAY?
BECAUSE IT SUITS ME, I SHALL *ANSWER* YOUR QUESTION, FEMALE! I AM *IXAR,* FROM THE STAR-SUN *SIRIUS*... AND I AM ENGAGED IN INTERGALACTIC WARFARE WITH POWERFUL *FOES!*
AS FOR YOUR PUNY PLANET, IT MEANS *NOTHING* TO ONE SUCH AS I! IT IS A MERE *PAWN* IN A STRUGGLE BEGUN *CENTURIES* AGO!
DON'T MOVE! LET HIM TALK! WE'VE GOT TO LEARN ALL WE *CAN!*
I AM *HERE,* EARTHLINGS, BECAUSE YOUR WORLD HAS SOMETHING WHICH I *WANT*-- WHICH I *NEED* FOR MY NEVER-ENDING WAR!
IT IS THE HOME OF A RACE OF *SUPER-HEROES* ... BEINGS WHOSE AWE-SOME POWERS I MAY TAP FOR MY OWN *USE!* AND, NOW, BEHOLD THE *FIRST TWO* SUCH CREATURES I HAVE CAPTURED!
THAT *PANEL*-- IT'S SLIDING BACK, TO REVEAL... *PIETRO*-- AND --*WANDA!!*
BUT THEN, WHO IS THE GIRL *BESIDE* US?
SOME SORT OF *ANDROID,* I'D GUESS... THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN WATCHING HER CLOSELY EVER SINCE WE *ARRIVED!*
SO.. YOU KNEW ALL *ALONG?* BUT *HOW*..?
LET'S JUST SAY I *SUSPECTED!* YOUR NEW POWERS... AND THIS *CAVE*-- WERE ALL A BIT TOO *HANDY!*

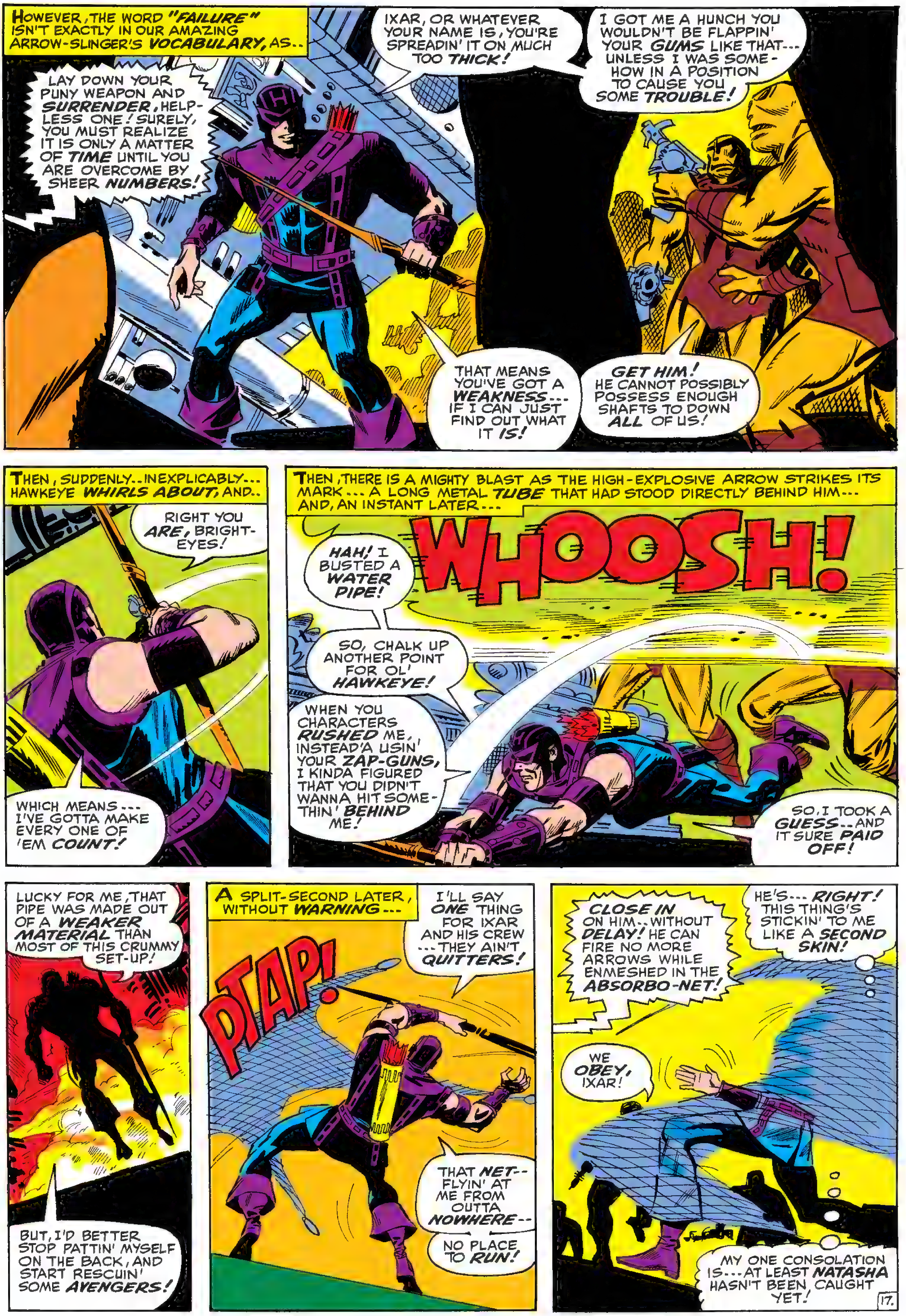

VERY CLEVER, MORTAL! STILL, YOUR CLEVERNESS WILL NOT SAVE YOU!
SHE..SHE'S STARTING TO CHANGE... BEFORE OUR VERY EYES!
YES...FOR, I AM BUT AN ANDROID, AS CAPTAIN AMERICA GUESSED...
A MERE INVENTION OF IXAR...CREATED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF LURING YOU INTO HIS TRAP...
...A TRAP FROM WHICH YOU SHALL NEVER ESCAPE!
Y'KNOW, I WISH I HAD A SAWBUCK FOR EVERY TIME I'VE HEARD SOME NUT SAY THAT!
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE HER, GOLIATH! I'M BETTING SHE'S GOT AN ACE UP HER SLEEVE!
JUST THE SAME, MY MONEY'S ON THE AVENGERS!
SO...YOU REFUSE TO SURRENDER! VERY WELL...THEN, WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TAKE YOU BY FORCE, AS WE CAPTURED YOUR FELLOW EARTHLINGS!
WHO'S GOING TO DO ALL THIS CAPTURING, LADY...YOU, OR THAT BODILESS HUNK OF GRAY MATTER YOU CALL IXAR?
LOOK BEHIND YOU...AND YOUR FALSE BRAVADO SHALL COME TO AN END!
THEN, WHIRLING ABOUT AT THE METALLIC CLANG OF A SECOND SLIDING PANEL, THE STARTLED STALWARTS BEHOLD...
MORE ANDROIDS...AN ALMOST ENDLESS LINE OF THEM!
FAR MORE THAN ANDROIDS--THEY ARE THE ULTROIDS...THE STRONGEST AND MOST TIRELESS OF THE MANY WEAPONS OF IXAR!
ONCE THEY HAVE CAPTURED YOU, YOUR POWERS ALSO SHALL FLOW THROUGH THEIR ARTIFICIAL VEINS...TILL EACH OF THEM IS THE EQUAL OF ALL THE AVENGERS!

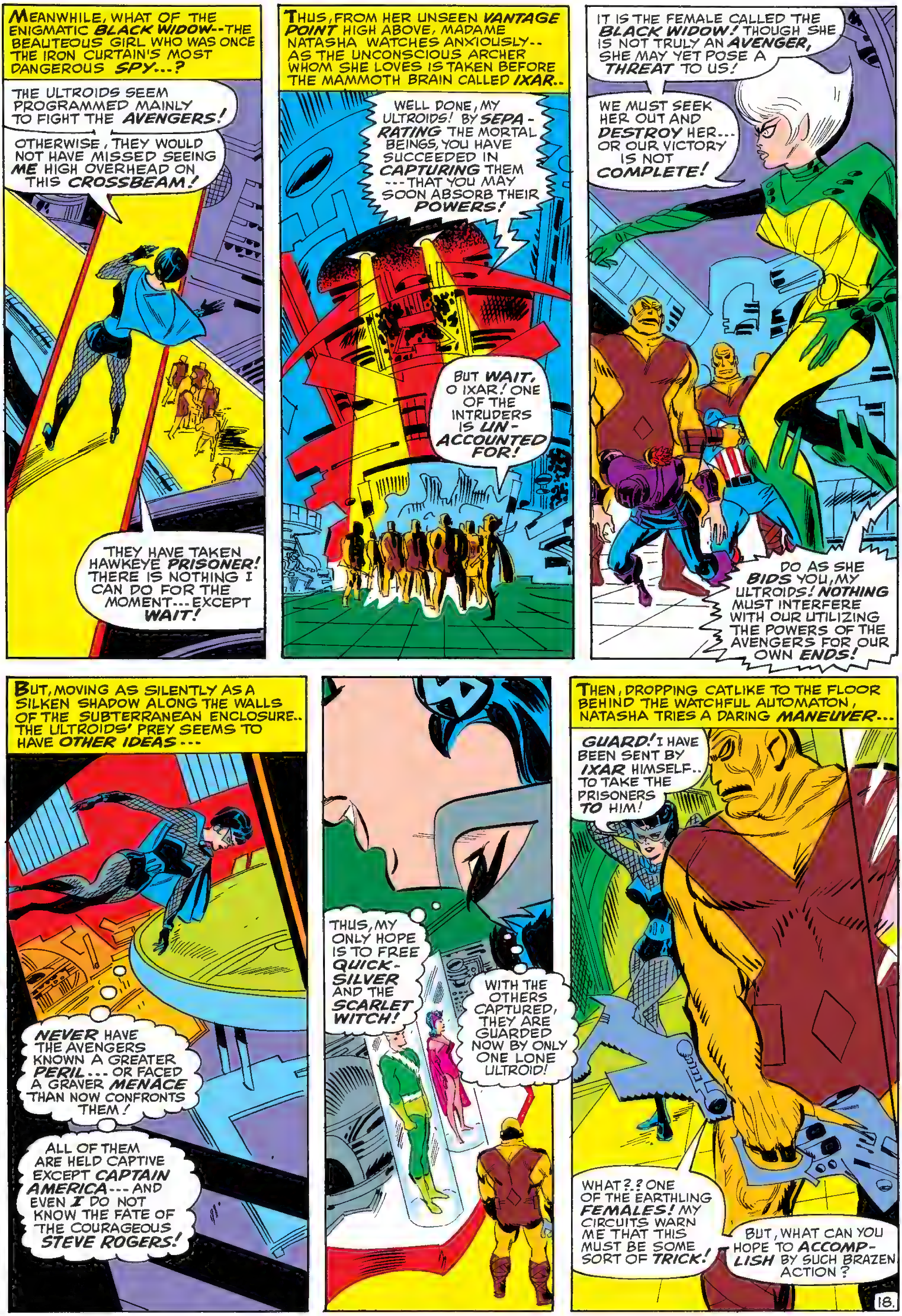

SO THAT'S THEIR GAME! EACH OF THEM IS LIKE A WALKING STORAGE BATTERY... AND IXAR PLANS TO USE OUR POWERS TO FORGE THEM INTO AN INVINCIBLE ARMY!
BUT, FROM THE WAY THEY'RE LUMBERING TOWARDS US, I'D SAY THEY HAVEN'T YET ABSORBED ANY OF PIETRO'S SPEED!
THAT'S THEIR TOUGH LUCK! GANGWAY, AND GIVE ME A CLEAR SHOT!
THWISH!
PARTNER, I WAS JUST ABOUT TO SAY THE SAME THING MYSELF!
BEWARE THE COLORFUL ONE'S SHIELD! UNNH!
KRASH!
HEY, CAP... WADDAYA KNOW! THOSE CHEERFUL CHARLIES CAN TALK!
THERE'S NOTHIN' LIKE A NICE NOISY BATTLE TO WAKE UP THE OL' CORPUSCLES!
SPLANG!
THANG!
I'M GLAD YOU FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT IT, PAL! JUST REMEMBER... WE'RE PLAYING FOR KEEPS!
LET THEM REMEMBER IT, CAP!
PERSONALLY, I'M JUST GONNA HAVE MYSELF A BALL, AND LET THE CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY!
THWAP!
THAT WAS ONE MANEUVER THOSE ALIEN ANDROIDS DIDN'T EXPECT! HANK RIPPED UP THE METAL FLOOR BENEATH THEIR FEET... AND SENT THEM SPRAWLING!
KEEP IT UP, GOLIATH! THIS IS MY CHANCE TO TRY AND REACH PIETRO AND WANDA!
STOP THEM, MY ULTROIDS! THEY MUST NOT FREE THEIR FELLOW AVENGERS... OR THE ODDS OF BATTLE MAY CHANGE IN THEIR FAVOR!

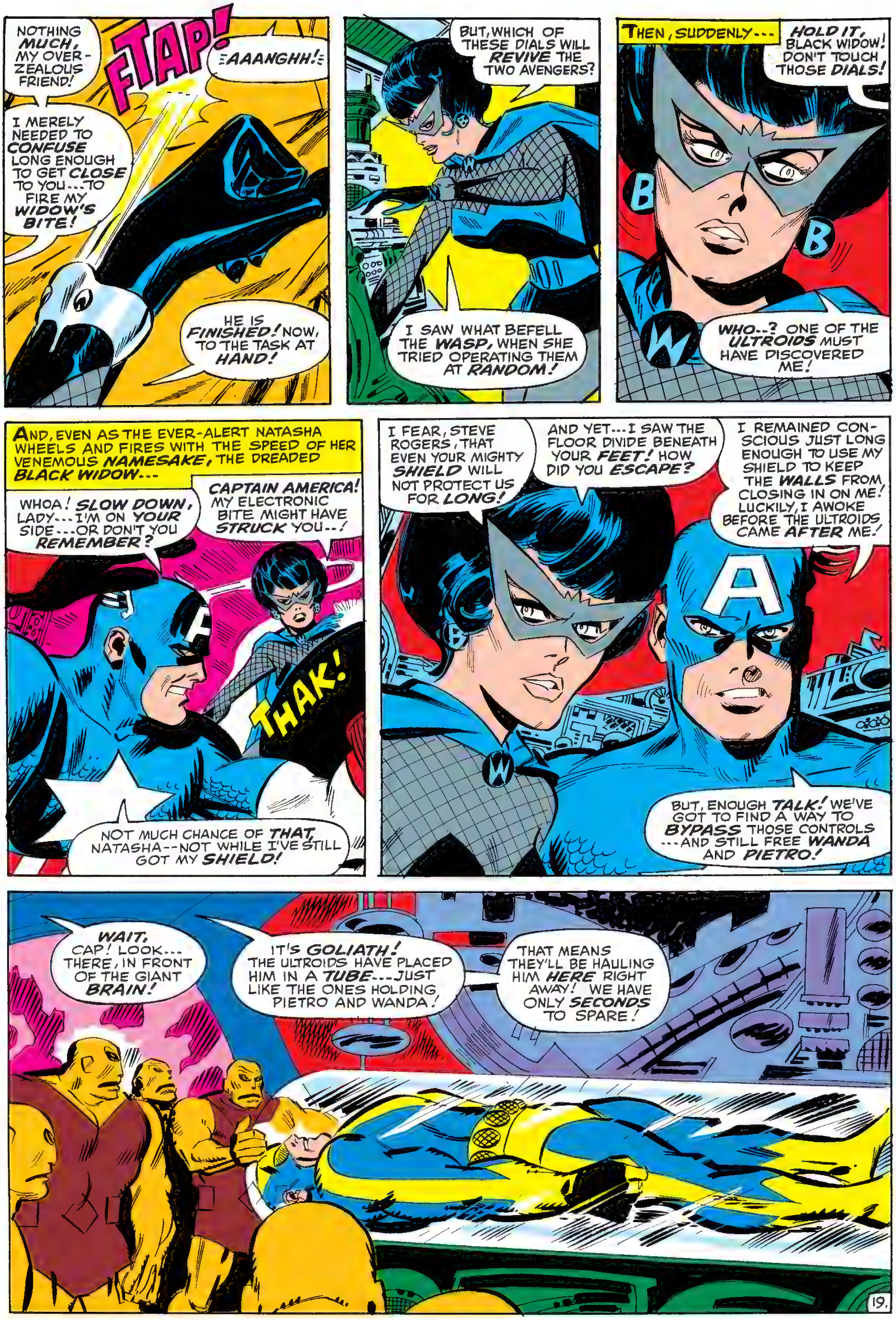

FUNNY YOU SHOULD *MENTION* THAT, BIG BRAIN---
PKOW!
--'CAUSE THAT HAPPENS TO BE EXACTLY WHAT I HAD IN *MIND!*
BUT, BEFORE THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER CAN REACH HIS GOAL, *STILL MORE* ULTROIDS LEAP TO BAR HIS PATH...
THEY KEEP *COMING*-- AND, SOME OF THEM ARE *ARMED*, TO BOOT!
FTAZP!
SURRENDER, MORTAL! DO NOT FORCE US TO TURN OUR WEAPONS TO *LETHAL INTENSITY!*
I WAS *AFRAID* OF THAT!
THEY HAVEN'T YET HIT US WITH ALL THEY'VE *GOT!*
JUST ANOTHER HANDFUL OF ULTROIDS BETWEEN ME AND THE *CAPTIVE AVENGERS!*
WH..? THE FLOOR... IT'S OPENING *UNDER* ME!
IT WAS A *TRAP!* I WAS SO BUSY FIGHTING IXAR'S MUSCULAR MINIONS THAT I DIDN'T HEAR THE TWO SECTIONS BEGIN TO *PART!*
BUT, THE BOTTOM CAN'T BE FAR *BELOW!* I'LL LAND ON MY FEET... AND CONTINUE THE *FIGHT!*
HOWEVER, TO CAP'S UTTER *ASTONISHMENT*...
UHNN! SOME SORT OF *SHOCK WAVES*... BOMBARDING ME FROM *ALL SIDES!*
CAN'T KEEP MY MY *BALANCE*.. CAN'T STAY *UPRIGHT*--!
THEN, THE SLIDING METAL PANELS CLOSE *ABOVE* HIM... AND THE STAR-SPANGLED SENTINEL IS LOST FROM *SIGHT*...

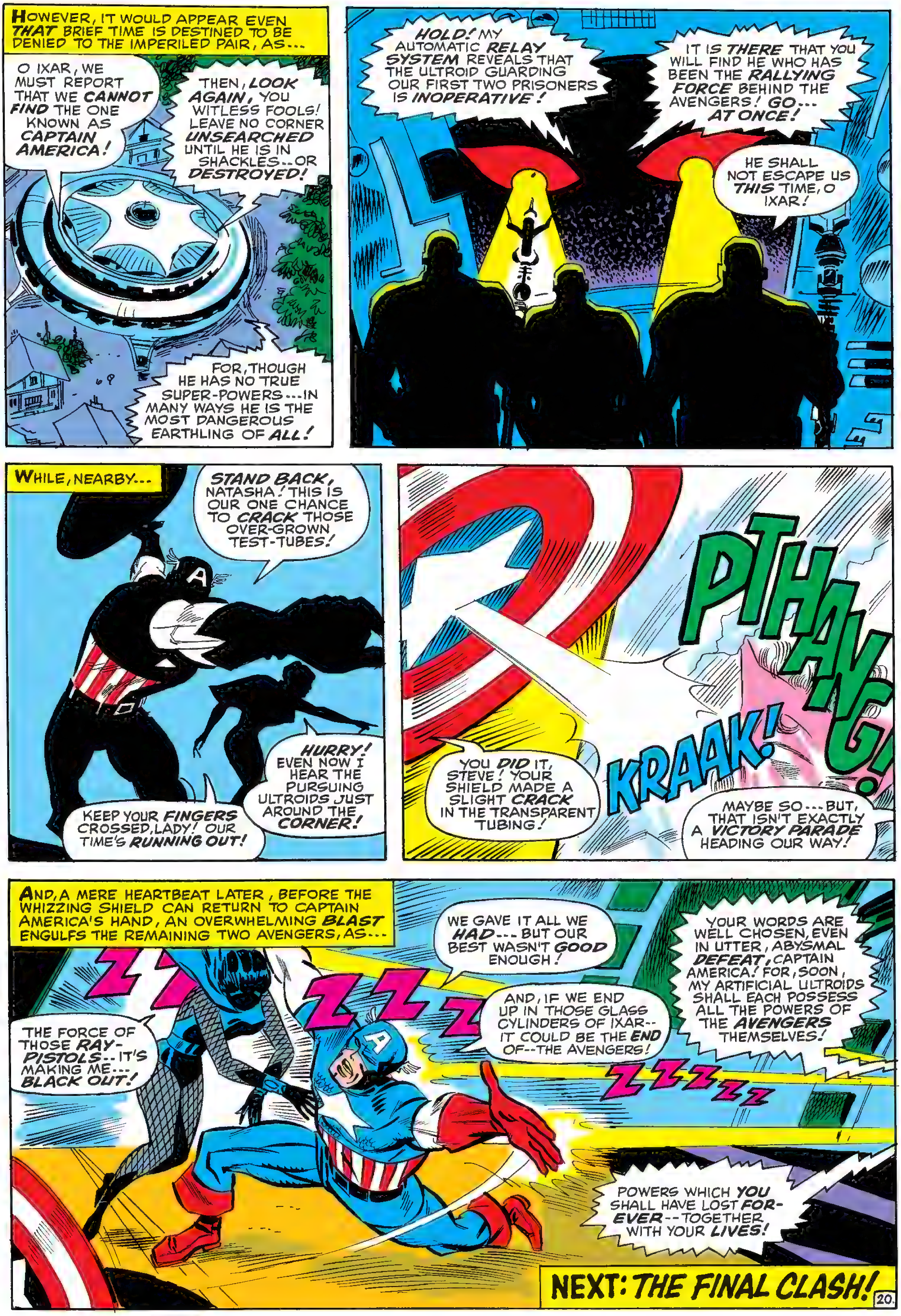

--WHILE, ON A CAVERN-SPANNING **BRIDGE** HIGH OVERHEAD, THE REDOUBTABLE **HAWKEYE** WITNESSES CAP'S APPARENT DOWNFALL, AND---
WEB-HEAD--- **CAPTURED!** I CAN'T **BELIEVE** IT! I **WON'T** BELIEVE IT!
I'LL FIRE A COUPLE OF FRIENDLY **BLAST ARROWS**, JUST TO STIR THINGS UP... AND THEN I'M GOIN' **AFTER** THAT SHIELD-SLINGIN' SONUVAGUN!
THE COMPLICATED MAZE OF **MACHINERY** OVER THERE... IF I CAN JUST DISRUPT SOME OF ITS **CIRCUITS**...
BTOOM!
NO GO! I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF METAL THIS PLACE IS **MADE** OF...
BUT, IT MAKES **STEEL** LOOK LIKE SO MUCH **PAPIER-MACHE!**
MEANWHILE, BEHIND THE ASTOUNDING ARCHER, A FUTURISTIC DRAWBRIDGE SILENTLY **LOWERS**, AS---
QUIETLY, MY BROTHERS.. **QUIETLY!** OUR OWN SYNTHETIC BODIES MAY BE LESS INVULNERABLE TO THE EARTHLING'S ARROWS THAN IS THE **SAUCER!**
THOSE JOKERS ARE ABOUT AS SILENT AS A **CHARGING RHINO!**
BUT, I'LL LET 'EM GET **CLOSER**, BEFORE I LET 'EM **HAVE** IT!
THEN, A SECOND LATER, TO HAWKEYE'S SURPRISE ---
HAH! I **HAVE** HIM!
MMMFF! SO MUCH FOR MY CRUMMY ATTEMPT AT **CLEVERNESS!**
EVIDENTLY, A **LITTLE** OF PIETRO'S SPEED RUBBED OFF ON 'EM! THIS GUY MOVED FASTER THAN I **EXPECTED!**
YET, BEFORE THE POWERFUL HANDS OF THE ULTROID CAN FELL HAWKEYE, THE STRONGEST AVENGER OF **ALL** JOINS THE FRANTIC FRAY---
HOLD ON, BOYS! DON'T YOU KNOW IT ISN'T **CRICKET** TO ATTACK A FELLA FROM **BEHIND**?
BTAM!
UNNH! IT IS THE **GIANT** EARTHMAN--THE ONE CALLED **GOLIATH!**
WELL, HOW D'YA LIKE **THAT!** **HIM** THEY **RECOGNIZE**... ME THEY JUST CALL "**EARTHLING**"!
THAT **SETTLES** IT... I'M JUST GONNA HAVE TO GET A NEW **PRESS AGENT!**
15.


THE NEXT SECOND, THE TABLES ARE TURNED, AS---
FRAK!
OOOFF! DIDN'T SEE THAT ONE--- BEHIND ME!
YOU ARE FORTUNATE, MORTAL, THAT WE WISH TO CAPTURE YOU ALIVE.. SO THAT WE MAY GAIN YOUR SIZE-CHANGING POWER!
BLACKING OUT...! CAN'T.. WITHSTAND ANY MORE BLASTS---
HANK'S OUT LIKE A LIGHT! IT'S TOO LATE TO HELP HIM NOW!
BUT, IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SEND A BLAST ARROW AT THAT RAY-PISTOL!
BA-ROOOM!
SO MUCH, FOR THAT POP-GUN! I WONDER HOW THE OTHERS ARE DOIN'!
AND, JUST IN CASE ANY OF OUR OTHER MIXED-UP MARVELITES ARE ASKING THEMSELVES THE SAME QUESTION, MAYBE IT'S TIME WE TOOK A PEEK AT WHAT THE WONDERFUL WASP IS ATTEMPTING, ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY---
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN BEING THE SIZE OF AN INSECT HAS ITS DISTINCT ADVANTAGES--- AND THIS LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THOSE TIMES!
THE REST OF THE AVENGERS COULDN'T GET THROUGH TO THIS CONTROL PANEL ABOVE WANDA AND PIETRO--- BUT NOBODY NOTICED ME FLITTING ABOUT!
THE ONLY DRAWBACK IS, I'M NOT SURE JUST WHICH OF THESE BUTTONS FREES THEM! ALL I CAN DO IS TRUST TO LUCK!
BUT, THE AVENGERS' LUCK SEEMS TO HAVE RUN OUT, FOR---
OHHH--! THE PANEL WAS ELECTRONICALLY BOOBY-TRAPPED! THE SHOCK--! CAN'T TAKE IT--!
ZZZAASP!
IT'S--ALL UP TO-- HAWKEYE--OR ELSE-- WE'VE-- FAILED--!

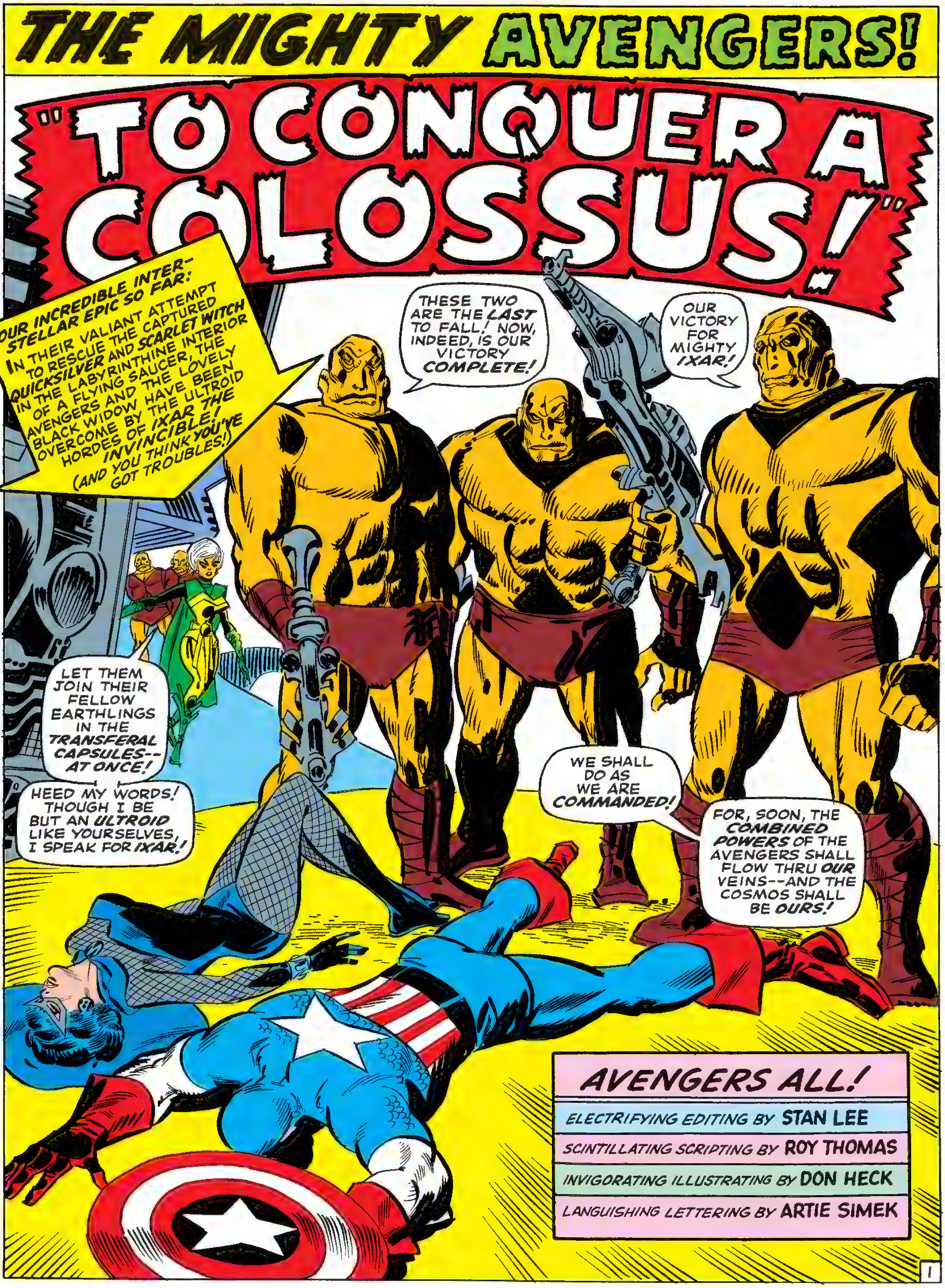

HOWEVER, THE WORD "FAILURE" ISN'T EXACTLY IN OUR AMAZING ARROW-SLINGER'S VOCABULARY, AS..
LAY DOWN YOUR PUNY WEAPON AND SURRENDER, HELPLESS ONE! SURELY, YOU MUST REALIZE IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL YOU ARE OVERCOME BY SHEER NUMBERS!
IXAR, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS, YOU'RE SPREADIN' IT ON MUCH TOO THICK!
I GOT ME A HUNCH YOU WOULDN'T BE FLAPPIN' YOUR GUMS LIKE THAT--- UNLESS I WAS SOMEHOW IN A POSITION TO CAUSE YOU SOME TROUBLE!
THAT MEANS YOU'VE GOT A WEAKNESS--- IF I CAN JUST FIND OUT WHAT IT IS!
GET HIM! HE CANNOT POSSIBLY POSSESS ENOUGH SHAFTS TO DOWN ALL OF US!
THEN, SUDDENLY..INEXPLICABLY... HAWKEYE WHIRLS ABOUT, AND..
RIGHT YOU ARE, BRIGHT-EYES!
WHICH MEANS--- I'VE GOTTA MAKE EVERY ONE OF 'EM COUNT!
THEN, THERE IS A MIGHTY BLAST AS THE HIGH-EXPLOSIVE ARROW STRIKES ITS MARK... A LONG METAL TUBE THAT HAD STOOD DIRECTLY BEHIND HIM--- AND, AN INSTANT LATER---
WHOOSH!
HAH! I BUSTED A WATER PIPE!
SO, CHALK UP ANOTHER POINT FOR OL' HAWKEYE!
WHEN YOU CHARACTERS RUSHED ME, INSTEAD'A USIN' YOUR ZAP-GUNS, I KINDA FIGURED THAT YOU DIDN'T WANNA HIT SOMETHIN' BEHIND ME!
SO, I TOOK A GUESS..AND IT SURE PAID OFF!
LUCKY FOR ME, THAT PIPE WAS MADE OUT OF A WEAKER MATERIAL THAN MOST OF THIS CRUMMY SET-UP!
BUT, I'D BETTER STOP PATTIN' MYSELF ON THE BACK, AND START RESCUIN' SOME AVENGERS!
A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, WITHOUT WARNING---
I'LL SAY ONE THING FOR IXAR AND HIS CREW ---THEY AIN'T QUITTERS!
PTAP!
THAT NET-- FLYIN' AT ME FROM OUTTA NOWHERE--
NO PLACE TO RUN!
CLOSE IN ON HIM..WITHOUT DELAY! HE CAN FIRE NO MORE ARROWS WHILE ENMESHED IN THE ABSORBO-NET!
HE'S--- RIGHT! THIS THING'S STICKIN' TO ME LIKE A SECOND SKIN!
WE OBEY, IXAR!
MY ONE CONSOLATION IS---AT LEAST NATASHA HASN'T BEEN CAUGHT YET!


MEANWHILE, WHAT OF THE ENIGMATIC BLACK WIDOW--THE BEAUTEOUS GIRL WHO WAS ONCE THE IRON CURTAIN'S MOST DANGEROUS SPY...?
THE ULTROIDS SEEM PROGRAMMED MAINLY TO FIGHT THE AVENGERS!
OTHERWISE, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE MISSED SEEING ME HIGH OVERHEAD ON THIS CROSSBEAM!
THEY HAVE TAKEN HAWKEYE PRISONER! THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO FOR THE MOMENT---EXCEPT WAIT!
THUS, FROM HER UNSEEN VANTAGE POINT HIGH ABOVE, MADAME NATASHA WATCHES ANXIOUSLY-- AS THE UNCONSCIOUS ARCHER WHOM SHE LOVES IS TAKEN BEFORE THE MAMMOTH BRAIN CALLED IXAR..
WELL DONE, MY ULTROIDS! BY SEPARATING THE MORTAL BEINGS, YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CAPTURING THEM ---THAT YOU MAY SOON ABSORB THEIR POWERS!
BUT WAIT, O IXAR! ONE OF THE INTRUDERS IS UN-ACCOUNTED FOR!
IT IS THE FEMALE CALLED THE BLACK WIDOW! THOUGH SHE IS NOT TRULY AN AVENGER, SHE MAY YET POSE A THREAT TO US!
WE MUST SEEK HER OUT AND DESTROY HER... OR OUR VICTORY IS NOT COMPLETE!
DO AS SHE BIDS YOU, MY ULTROIDS! NOTHING MUST INTERFERE WITH OUR UTILIZING THE POWERS OF THE AVENGERS FOR OUR OWN ENDS!
BUT, MOVING AS SILENTLY AS A SILKEN SHADOW ALONG THE WALLS OF THE SUBTERRANEAN ENCLOSURE.. THE ULTROIDS' PREY SEEMS TO HAVE OTHER IDEAS---
NEVER HAVE THE AVENGERS KNOWN A GREATER PERIL... OR FACED A GRAVER MENACE THAN NOW CONFRONTS THEM!
ALL OF THEM ARE HELD CAPTIVE EXCEPT CAPTAIN AMERICA---AND EVEN I DO NOT KNOW THE FATE OF THE COURAGEOUS STEVE ROGERS!
THUS, MY ONLY HOPE IS TO FREE QUICKSILVER AND THE SCARLET WITCH!
WITH THE OTHERS CAPTURED, THEY ARE GUARDED NOW BY ONLY ONE LONE ULTROID!
THEN, DROPPING CATLIKE TO THE FLOOR BEHIND THE WATCHFUL AUTOMATON, NATASHA TRIES A DARING MANEUVER...
GUARD! I HAVE BEEN SENT BY IXAR HIMSELF.. TO TAKE THE PRISONERS TO HIM!
WHAT?.? ONE OF THE EARTHLING FEMALES! MY CIRCUITS WARN ME THAT THIS MUST BE SOME SORT OF TRICK!
BUT, WHAT CAN YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH BY SUCH BRAZEN ACTION?
18.


NOTHING MUCH, MY OVER-ZEALOUS FRIEND!
FTAP!
AAANGHH!
I MERELY NEEDED TO CONFUSE LONG ENOUGH TO GET CLOSE TO YOU...TO FIRE MY WIDOW'S BITE!
HE IS FINISHED! NOW, TO THE TASK AT HAND!
BUT, WHICH OF THESE DIALS WILL REVIVE THE TWO AVENGERS?
I SAW WHAT BEFELL THE WASP, WHEN SHE TRIED OPERATING THEM AT RANDOM!
THEN, SUDDENLY...
HOLD IT, BLACK WIDOW! DON'T TOUCH THOSE DIALS!
WHO..? ONE OF THE ULTROIDS MUST HAVE DISCOVERED ME!
AND, EVEN AS THE EVER-ALERT NATASHA WHEELS AND FIRES WITH THE SPEED OF HER VENEMOUS NAMESAKE, THE DREADED BLACK WIDOW...
WHOA! SLOW DOWN, LADY...I'M ON YOUR SIDE...OR DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
CAPTAIN AMERICA! MY ELECTRONIC BITE MIGHT HAVE STRUCK YOU--!
THAK!
NOT MUCH CHANCE OF THAT, NATASHA--NOT WHILE I'VE STILL GOT MY SHIELD!
I FEAR, STEVE ROGERS, THAT EVEN YOUR MIGHTY SHIELD WILL NOT PROTECT US FOR LONG!
AND YET...I SAW THE FLOOR DIVIDE BENEATH YOUR FEET! HOW DID YOU ESCAPE?
I REMAINED CONSCIOUS JUST LONG ENOUGH TO USE MY SHIELD TO KEEP THE WALLS FROM CLOSING IN ON ME! LUCKILY, I AWOKE BEFORE THE ULTROIDS CAME AFTER ME!
BUT, ENOUGH TALK! WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO BYPASS THOSE CONTROLS ...AND STILL FREE WANDA AND PIETRO!
WAIT, CAP! LOOK... THERE, IN FRONT OF THE GIANT BRAIN!
IT'S GOLIATH! THE ULTROIDS HAVE PLACED HIM IN A TUBE...JUST LIKE THE ONES HOLDING PIETRO AND WANDA!
THAT MEANS THEY'LL BE HAULING HIM HERE RIGHT AWAY! WE HAVE ONLY SECONDS TO SPARE!


HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR EVEN *THAT* BRIEF TIME IS DESTINED TO BE DENIED TO THE IMPERILED PAIR, AS...
O IXAR, WE MUST REPORT THAT WE *CANNOT FIND* THE ONE KNOWN AS *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*
THEN, *LOOK AGAIN,* YOU WITLESS FOOLS! LEAVE NO CORNER *UNSEARCHED* UNTIL HE IS IN SHACKLES--OR *DESTROYED!*
FOR, THOUGH HE HAS NO TRUE SUPER-POWERS---IN MANY WAYS HE IS THE MOST DANGEROUS EARTHLING OF *ALL!*
HOLD! MY AUTOMATIC *RELAY SYSTEM* REVEALS THAT THE ULTROID GUARDING OUR FIRST TWO PRISONERS IS *INOPERATIVE!*
IT IS *THERE* THAT YOU WILL FIND HE WHO HAS BEEN THE *RALLYING FORCE* BEHIND THE AVENGERS! *GO--- AT ONCE!*
HE SHALL NOT ESCAPE US *THIS* TIME, O IXAR!
WHILE, NEARBY...
STAND BACK, NATASHA! THIS IS OUR ONE CHANCE TO *CRACK* THOSE OVER-GROWN TEST-TUBES!
HURRY! EVEN NOW I HEAR THE PURSUING ULTROIDS JUST AROUND THE *CORNER!*
KEEP YOUR *FINGERS* CROSSED, LADY! OUR TIME'S *RUNNING OUT!*
PTHANG!
KRAAK!
YOU *DID* IT, STEVE! YOUR SHIELD MADE A SLIGHT *CRACK* IN THE TRANSPARENT TUBING!
MAYBE SO---BUT, THAT ISN'T EXACTLY A *VICTORY PARADE* HEADING OUR WAY!
AND, A MERE HEARTBEAT LATER, BEFORE THE WHIZZING SHIELD CAN RETURN TO CAPTAIN AMERICA'S HAND, AN OVERWHELMING *BLAST* ENGULFS THE REMAINING TWO AVENGERS, AS...
ZZ
ZZZ
THE FORCE OF THOSE *RAY-PISTOLS*-- IT'S MAKING ME--- *BLACK OUT!*
WE GAVE IT ALL WE *HAD*--- BUT OUR BEST WASN'T *GOOD* ENOUGH!
AND, IF WE END UP IN THOSE GLASS CYLINDERS OF IXAR-- IT COULD BE THE *END* OF--THE AVENGERS!
ZZZZZ
YOUR WORDS ARE WELL CHOSEN, EVEN IN UTTER, ABYSMAL *DEFEAT,* CAPTAIN AMERICA! FOR, SOON, MY ARTIFICIAL ULTROIDS SHALL EACH POSSESS ALL THE POWERS OF THE *AVENGERS* THEMSELVES!
POWERS WHICH *YOU* SHALL HAVE LOST *FOREVER*--TOGETHER WITH YOUR *LIVES!*
NEXT: *THE FINAL CLASH!*

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
37 FEB
"TO CONQUER A COLOSSUS!"


THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"TO CONQUER A COLOSSUS!"
OUR INCREDIBLE INTER-STELLAR EPIC SO FAR: IN THEIR VALIANT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE CAPTURED QUICKSILVER AND SCARLET WITCH IN THE LABYRINTHINE INTERIOR OF A FLYING SAUCER, THE AVENGERS AND THE LOVELY BLACK WIDOW HAVE BEEN OVERCOME BY THE ULTROID HORDES OF IXAR THE INVINCIBLE! (AND YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLES!)
THESE TWO ARE THE LAST TO FALL! NOW, INDEED, IS OUR VICTORY COMPLETE!
OUR VICTORY FOR MIGHTY IXAR!
LET THEM JOIN THEIR FELLOW EARTHLINGS IN THE TRANSFERAL CAPSULES-- AT ONCE!
HEED MY WORDS! THOUGH I BE BUT AN ULTROID LIKE YOURSELVES, I SPEAK FOR IXAR!
WE SHALL DO AS WE ARE COMMANDED!
FOR, SOON, THE COMBINED POWERS OF THE AVENGERS SHALL FLOW THRU OUR VEINS--AND THE COSMOS SHALL BE OURS!
AVENGERS ALL!
ELECTRIFYING EDITING BY STAN LEE
SCINTILLATING SCRIPTING BY ROY THOMAS
INVIGORATING ILLUSTRATING BY DON HECK
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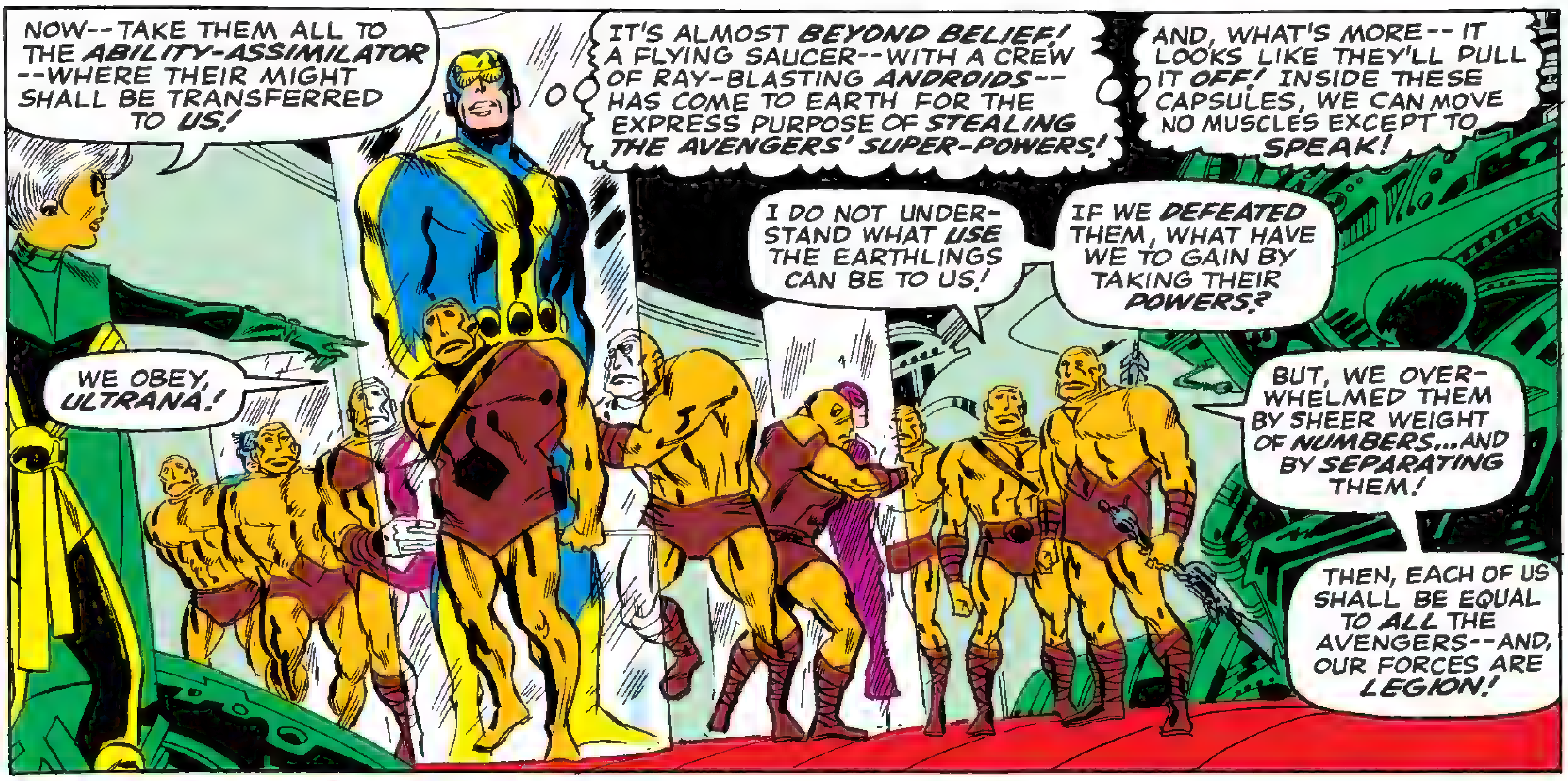
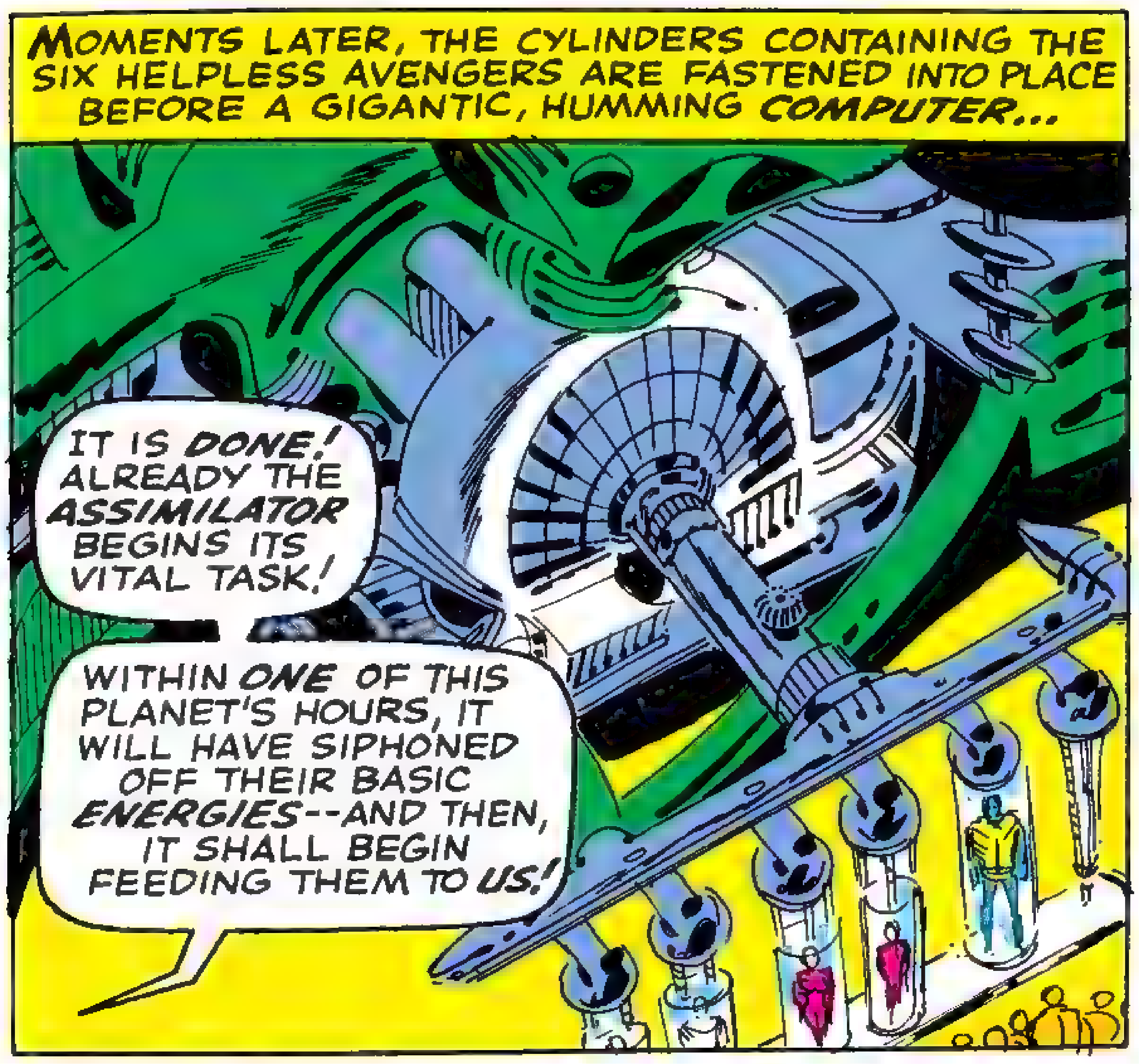
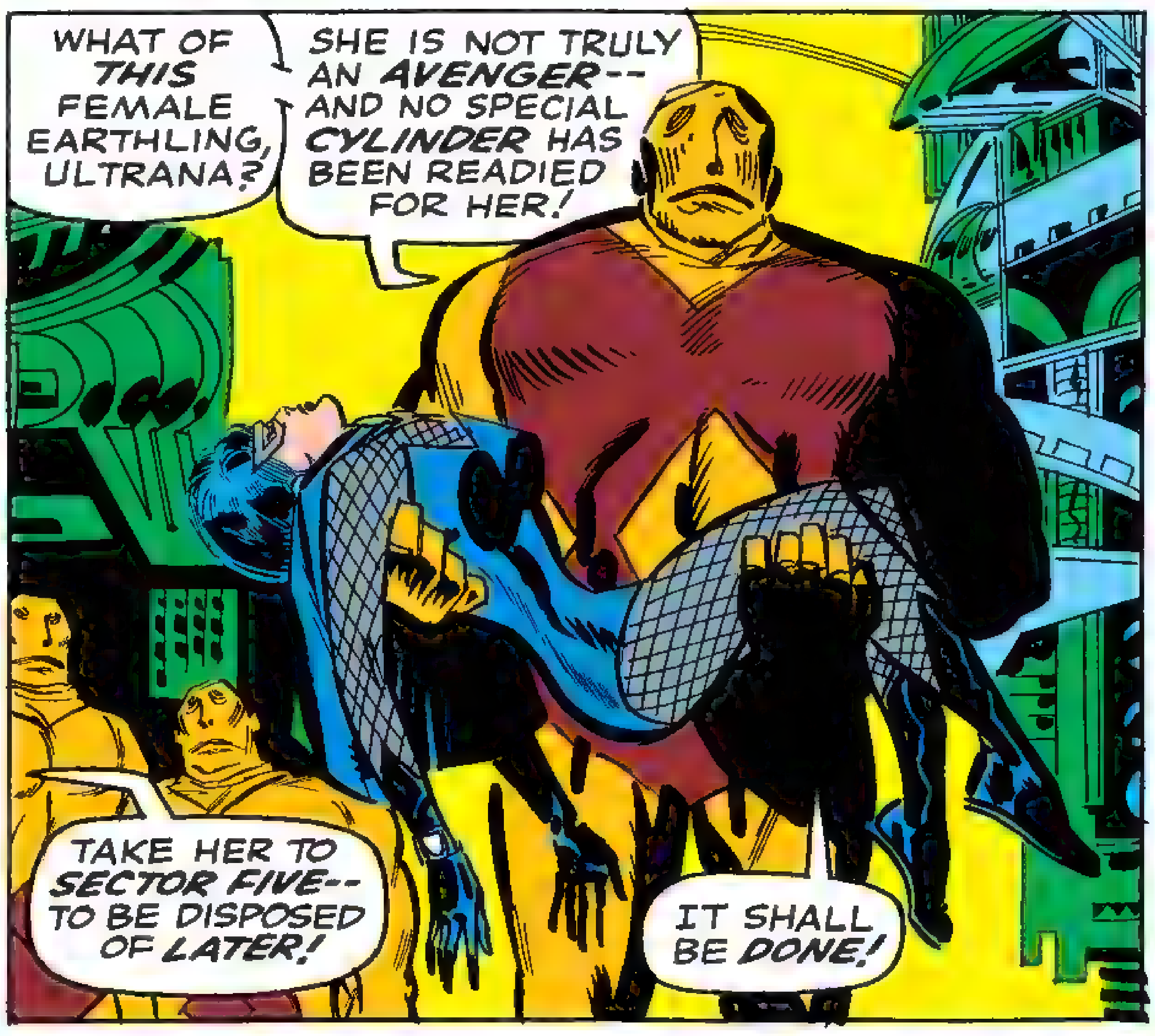
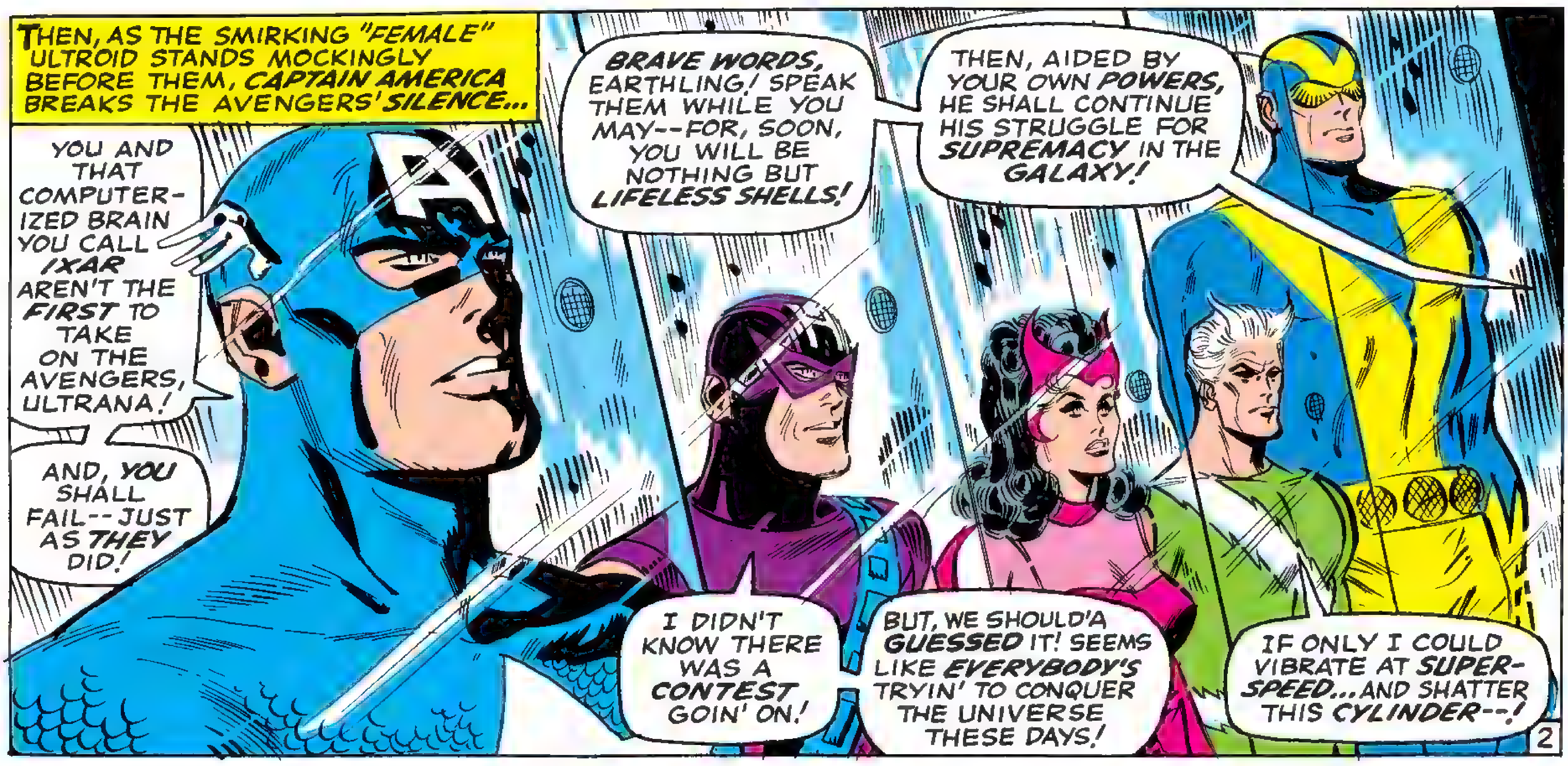
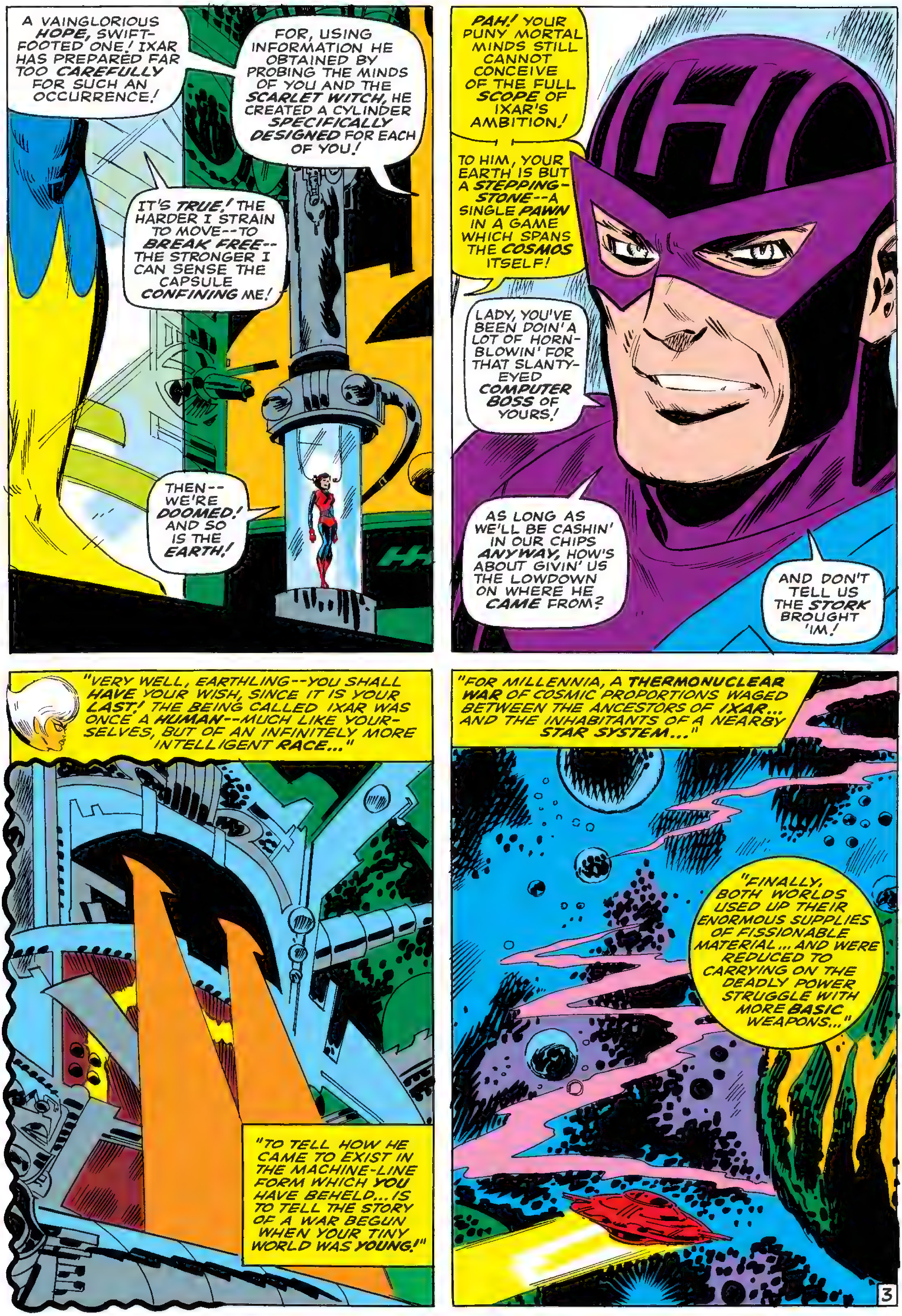
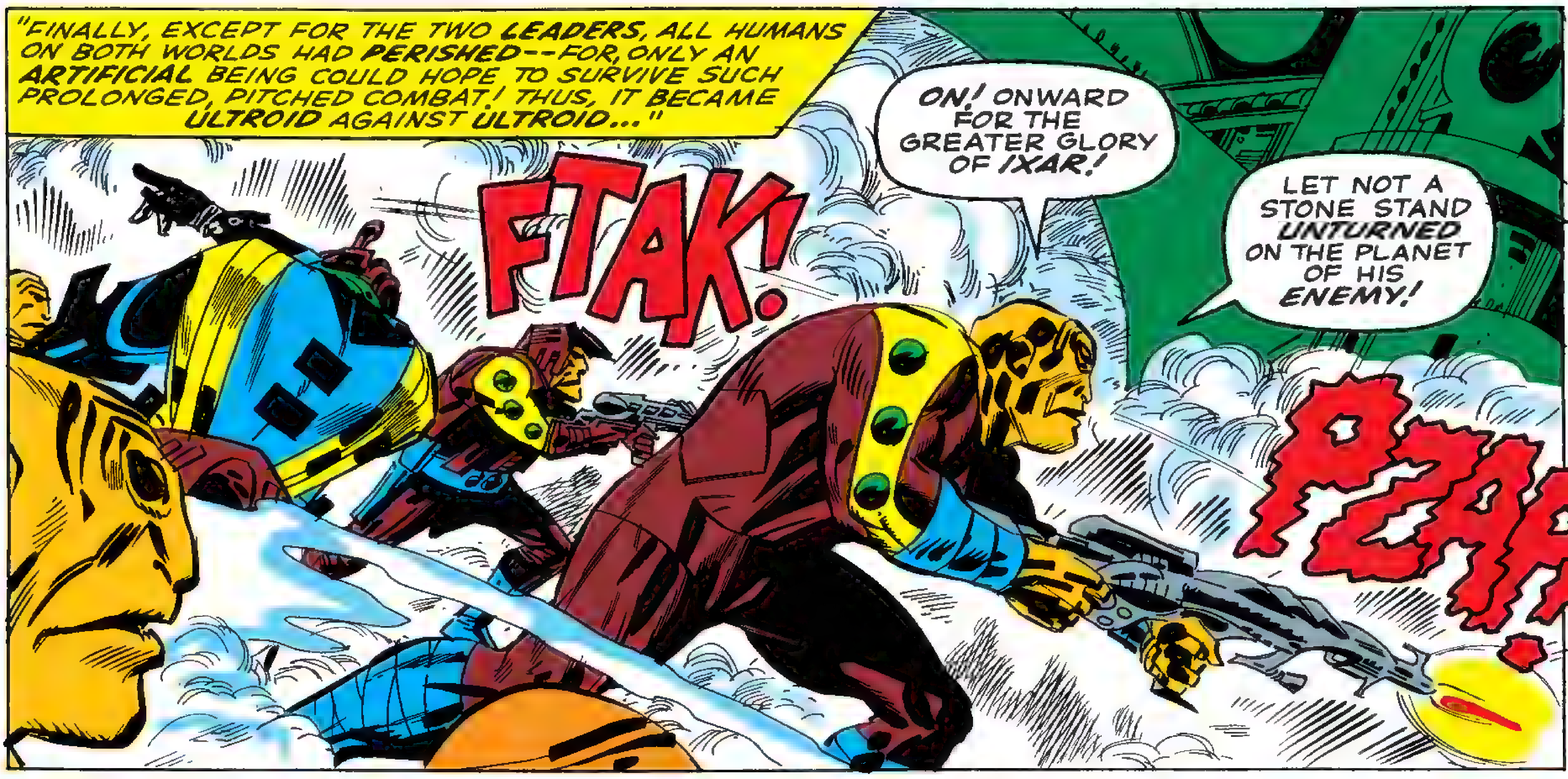

NOW--TAKE THEM ALL TO THE ***ABILITY-ASSIMILATOR*** --WHERE THEIR MIGHT SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO ***US!***
IT'S ALMOST ***BEYOND BELIEF!*** A FLYING SAUCER--WITH A CREW OF RAY-BLASTING ***ANDROIDS***--HAS COME TO EARTH FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF ***STEALING THE AVENGERS' SUPER-POWERS!***
AND, WHAT'S MORE--IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'LL PULL IT ***OFF!*** INSIDE THESE CAPSULES, WE CAN MOVE NO MUSCLES EXCEPT TO ***SPEAK!***
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT ***USE*** THE EARTHLINGS CAN BE TO US!
IF WE ***DEFEATED*** THEM, WHAT HAVE WE TO GAIN BY TAKING THEIR ***POWERS?***
WE OBEY, ***ULTRANA!***
BUT, WE OVERWHELMED THEM BY SHEER WEIGHT OF ***NUMBERS...*** AND BY ***SEPARATING*** THEM!
THEN, EACH OF US SHALL BE EQUAL TO ***ALL*** THE AVENGERS--AND, OUR FORCES ARE ***LEGION!***

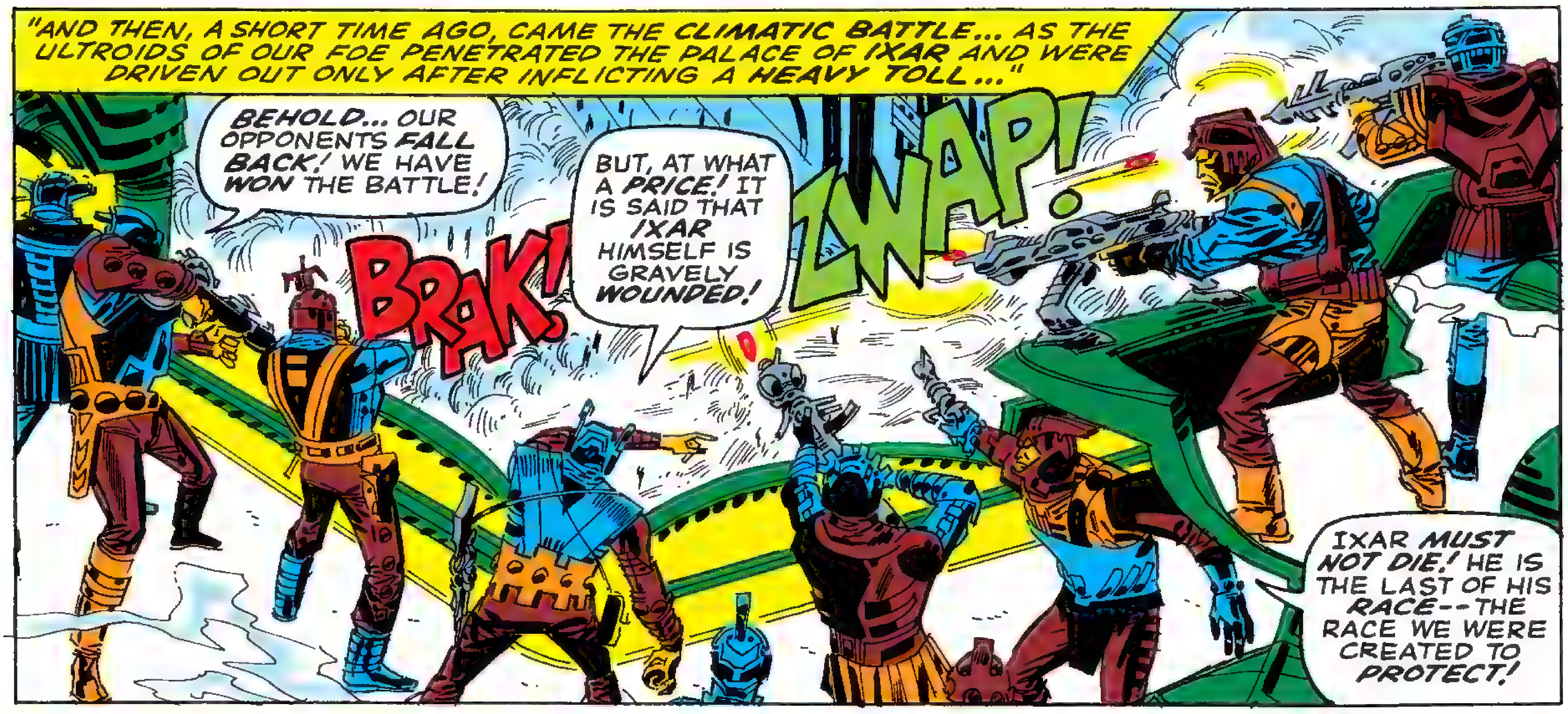

MOMENTS LATER, THE CYLINDERS CONTAINING THE SIX HELPLESS AVENGERS ARE FASTENED INTO PLACE BEFORE A GIGANTIC, HUMMING ***COMPUTER...***
IT IS ***DONE!*** ALREADY THE ***ASSIMILATOR*** BEGINS ITS VITAL TASK!
WITHIN ***ONE*** OF THIS PLANET'S HOURS, IT WILL HAVE SIPHONED OFF THEIR BASIC ***ENERGIES***--AND THEN, IT SHALL BEGIN FEEDING THEM TO ***US!***

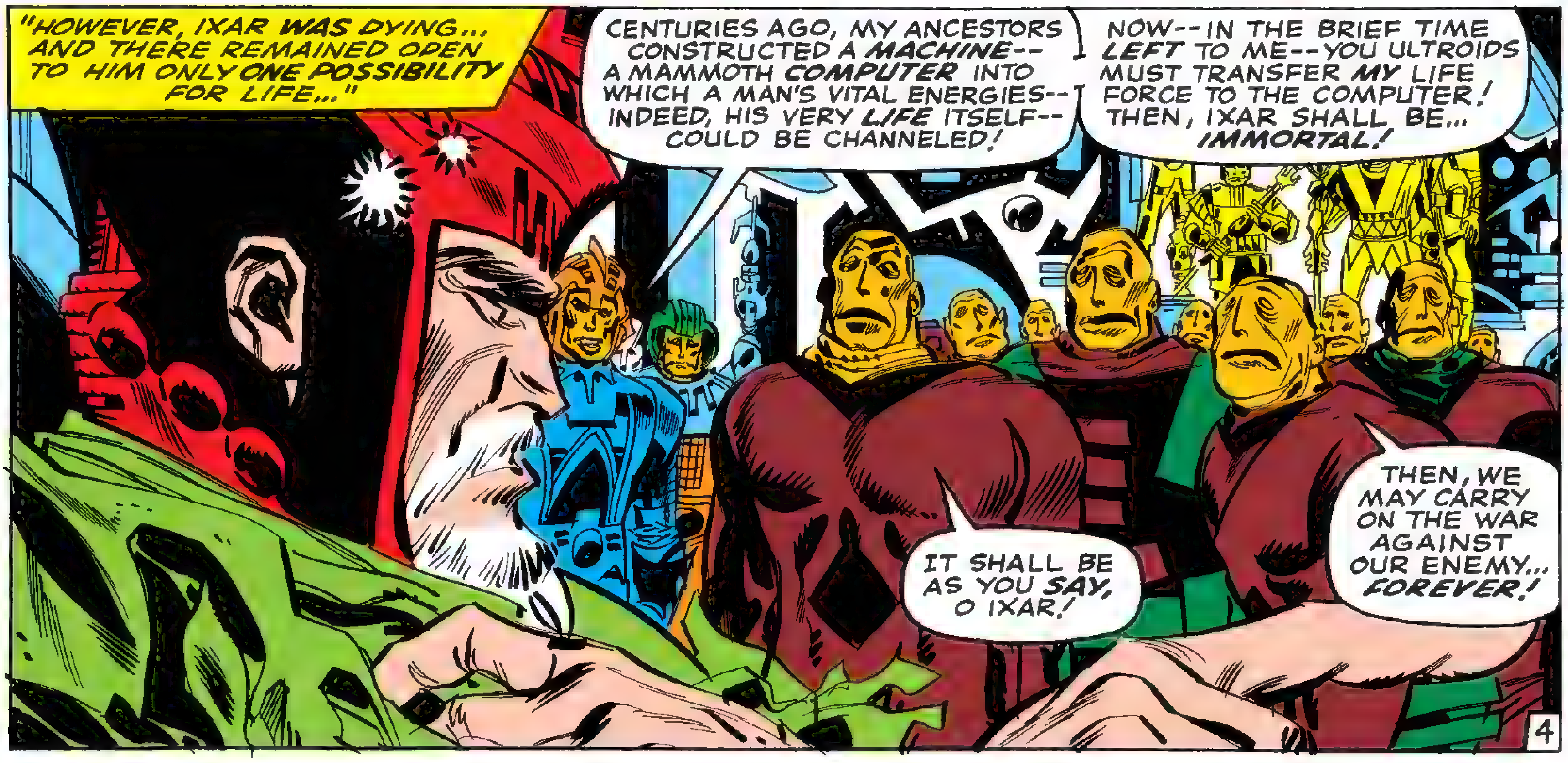

WHAT OF ***THIS*** FEMALE EARTHLING, ULTRANA?
SHE IS NOT TRULY AN ***AVENGER***--AND NO SPECIAL ***CYLINDER*** HAS BEEN READIED FOR HER!
TAKE HER TO ***SECTOR FIVE***--TO BE DISPOSED OF ***LATER!***
IT SHALL BE ***DONE!***

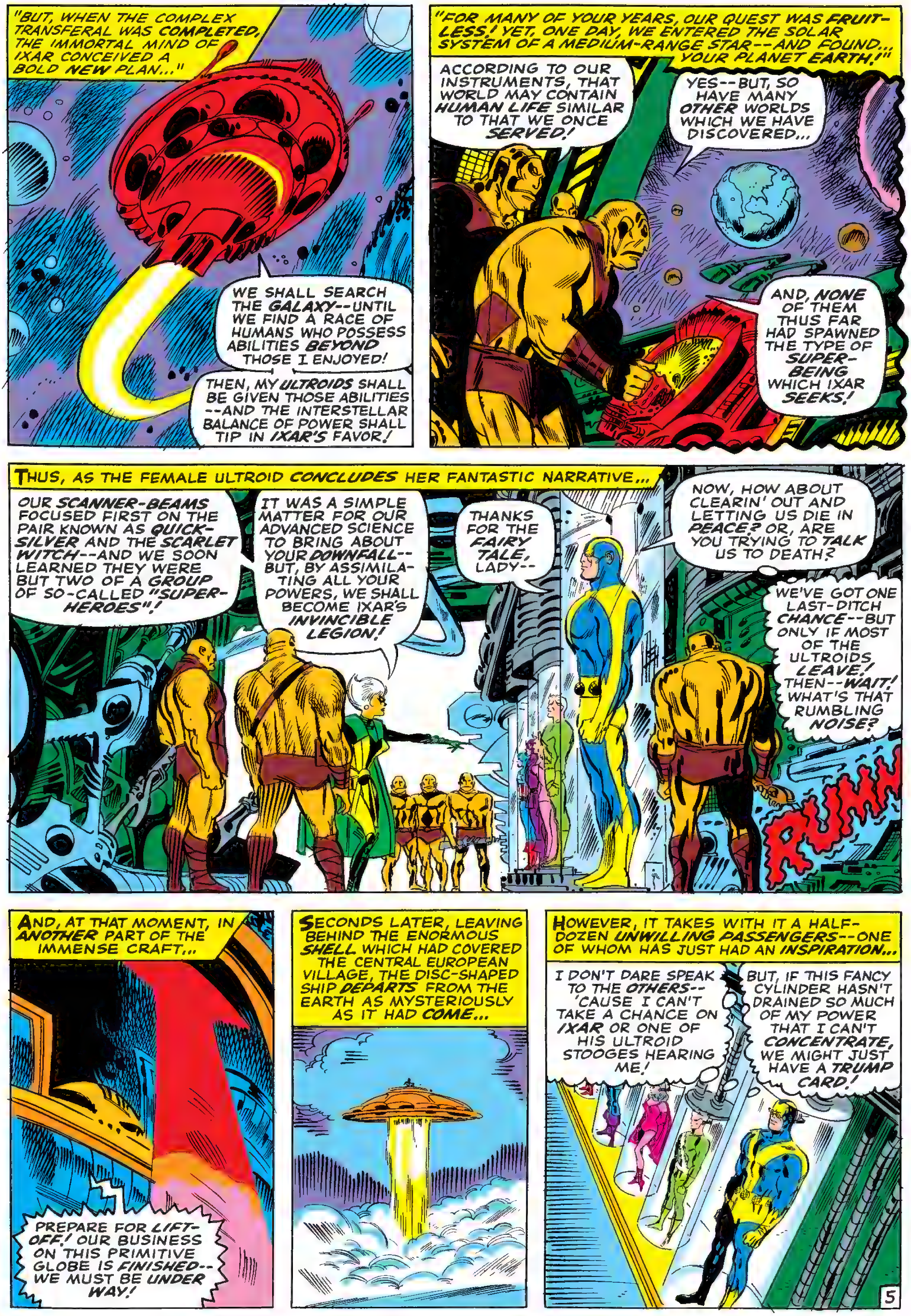

THEN, AS THE SMIRKING ***"FEMALE"*** ULTROID STANDS MOCKINGLY BEFORE THEM, ***CAPTAIN AMERICA*** BREAKS THE AVENGERS' ***SILENCE...***
YOU AND THAT COMPUTERIZED BRAIN YOU CALL ***IXAR*** AREN'T THE ***FIRST*** TO TAKE ON THE AVENGERS, ULTRANA!
AND, ***YOU*** SHALL FAIL--JUST AS ***THEY*** DID!
BRAVE WORDS, EARTHLING! SPEAK THEM WHILE YOU MAY--FOR, SOON, YOU WILL BE NOTHING BUT ***LIFELESS SHELLS!***
THEN, AIDED BY YOUR OWN ***POWERS,*** HE SHALL CONTINUE HIS STRUGGLE FOR ***SUPREMACY*** IN THE ***GALAXY!***
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A ***CONTEST*** GOIN' ON!
BUT, WE SHOULD'A ***GUESSED*** IT! SEEMS LIKE ***EVERYBODY'S*** TRYIN' TO CONQUER THE UNIVERSE THESE DAYS!
IF ONLY I COULD VIBRATE AT ***SUPER-SPEED...*** AND SHATTER THIS ***CYLINDER--!***

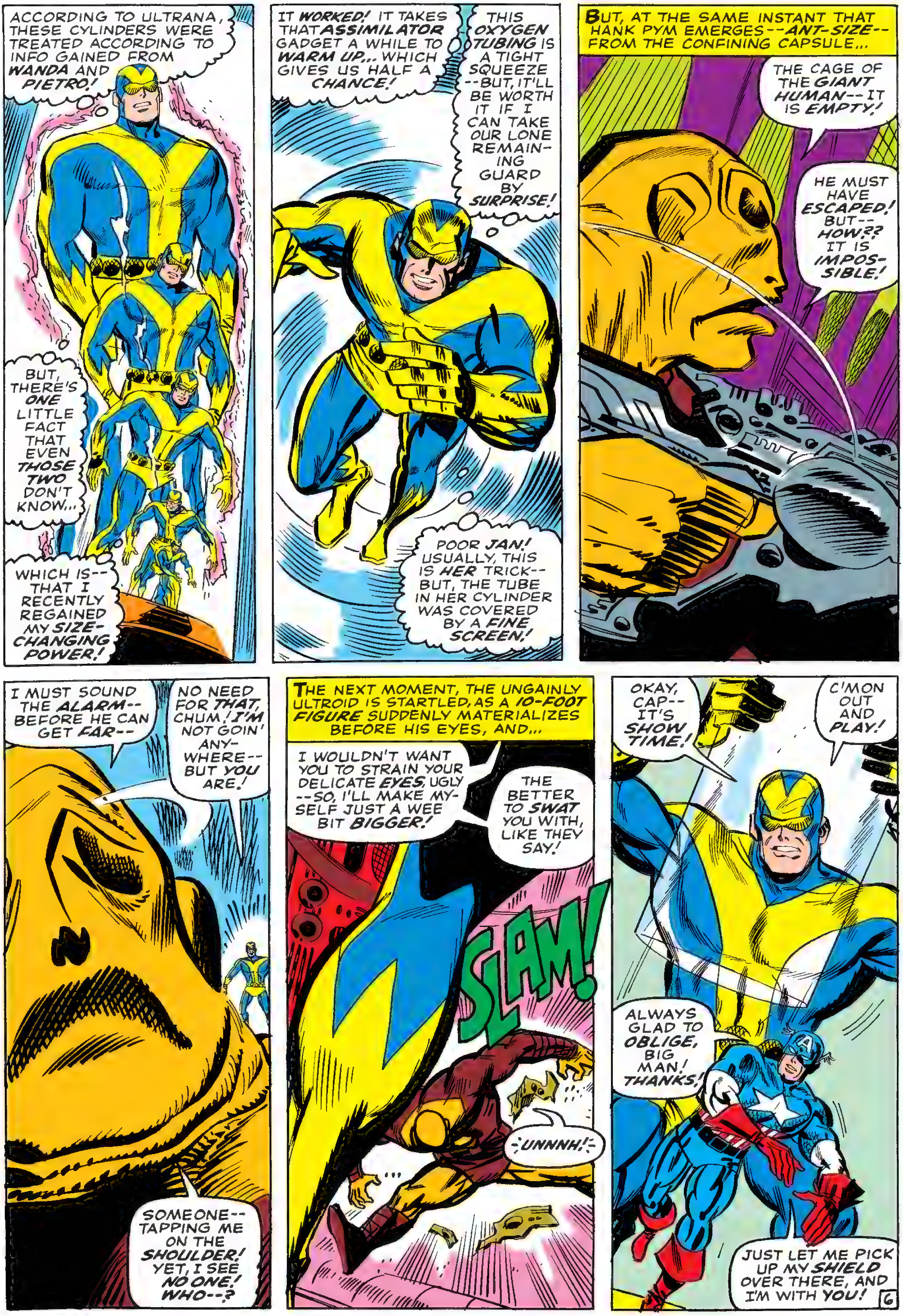

A VAINGLORIOUS ***HOPE***, SWIFT-FOOTED ONE! IXAR HAS PREPARED FAR TOO ***CAREFULLY*** FOR SUCH AN OCCURRENCE!
FOR, USING INFORMATION HE OBTAINED BY PROBING THE MINDS OF YOU AND THE ***SCARLET WITCH***, HE CREATED A CYLINDER ***SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED*** FOR EACH OF YOU!
IT'S ***TRUE!*** THE HARDER I STRAIN TO MOVE--TO ***BREAK FREE***--THE STRONGER I CAN SENSE THE CAPSULE ***CONFINING*** ME!
THEN--WE'RE ***DOOMED!*** AND SO IS THE ***EARTH!***
PAH! YOUR PUNY MORTAL MINDS STILL CANNOT CONCEIVE OF THE FULL ***SCOPE*** OF IXAR'S AMBITION!
TO HIM, YOUR EARTH IS BUT A ***STEPPING-STONE***--A SINGLE ***PAWN*** IN A GAME WHICH SPANS THE ***COSMOS*** ITSELF!
LADY, YOU'VE BEEN DOIN' A LOT OF HORN-BLOWIN' FOR THAT SLANTY-EYED ***COMPUTER BOSS*** OF YOURS!
AS LONG AS WE'LL BE CASHIN' IN OUR CHIPS ***ANYWAY***, HOW'S ABOUT GIVIN' US THE LOWDOWN ON WHERE HE ***CAME*** FROM?
AND DON'T TELL US THE ***STORK*** BROUGHT 'IM!
"VERY WELL, EARTHLING--YOU SHALL ***HAVE*** YOUR WISH, SINCE IT IS YOUR ***LAST!*** THE BEING CALLED IXAR WAS ONCE A ***HUMAN***--MUCH LIKE YOURSELVES, BUT OF AN INFINITELY MORE INTELLIGENT ***RACE***..."
"TO TELL HOW HE CAME TO EXIST IN THE MACHINE-LINE FORM WHICH ***YOU*** HAVE BEHELD... IS TO TELL THE STORY OF A WAR BEGUN WHEN YOUR TINY WORLD WAS ***YOUNG!***"
"FOR MILLENNIA, A ***THERMONUCLEAR WAR*** OF COSMIC PROPORTIONS WAGED BETWEEN THE ANCESTORS OF ***IXAR***... AND THE INHABITANTS OF A NEARBY ***STAR SYSTEM***..."
"FINALLY, BOTH WORLDS USED UP THEIR ENORMOUS SUPPLIES OF FISSIONABLE MATERIAL... AND WERE REDUCED TO CARRYING ON THE DEADLY POWER STRUGGLE WITH MORE ***BASIC*** WEAPONS..."


"FINALLY, EXCEPT FOR THE TWO LEADERS, ALL HUMANS ON BOTH WORLDS HAD PERISHED--FOR ONLY AN ARTIFICIAL BEING COULD HOPE TO SURVIVE SUCH PROLONGED, PITCHED COMBAT! THUS, IT BECAME ULTROID AGAINST ULTROID..."
FTAK!
ON! ONWARD FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF IXAR!
LET NOT A STONE STAND UNTURNED ON THE PLANET OF HIS ENEMY!
PZAP!


"AND THEN, A SHORT TIME AGO, CAME THE CLIMATIC BATTLE... AS THE ULTROIDS OF OUR FOE PENETRATED THE PALACE OF IXAR AND WERE DRIVEN OUT ONLY AFTER INFLICTING A HEAVY TOLL..."
BEHOLD... OUR OPPONENTS FALL BACK! WE HAVE WON THE BATTLE!
BRAK!
BUT, AT WHAT A PRICE! IT IS SAID THAT IXAR HIMSELF IS GRAVELY WOUNDED!
ZWAP!
IXAR MUST NOT DIE! HE IS THE LAST OF HIS RACE--THE RACE WE WERE CREATED TO PROTECT!


"HOWEVER, IXAR WAS DYING... AND THERE REMAINED OPEN TO HIM ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY FOR LIFE..."
CENTURIES AGO, MY ANCESTORS CONSTRUCTED A MACHINE--A MAMMOTH COMPUTER INTO WHICH A MAN'S VITAL ENERGIES--INDEED, HIS VERY LIFE ITSELF--COULD BE CHANNELED!
NOW--IN THE BRIEF TIME LEFT TO ME--YOU ULTROIDS MUST TRANSFER MY LIFE FORCE TO THE COMPUTER! THEN, IXAR SHALL BE... IMMORTAL!
IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY, O IXAR!
THEN, WE MAY CARRY ON THE WAR AGAINST OUR ENEMY... FOREVER!


"BUT, WHEN THE COMPLEX TRANSFERAL WAS COMPLETED, THE IMMORTAL MIND OF IXAR CONCEIVED A BOLD NEW PLAN..."
WE SHALL SEARCH THE GALAXY--UNTIL WE FIND A RACE OF HUMANS WHO POSSESS ABILITIES BEYOND THOSE I ENJOYED!
THEN, MY ULTROIDS SHALL BE GIVEN THOSE ABILITIES --AND THE INTERSTELLAR BALANCE OF POWER SHALL TIP IN IXAR'S FAVOR!
"FOR MANY OF YOUR YEARS, OUR QUEST WAS FRUITLESS! YET, ONE DAY, WE ENTERED THE SOLAR SYSTEM OF A MEDIUM-RANGE STAR--AND FOUND... YOUR PLANET EARTH!"
ACCORDING TO OUR INSTRUMENTS, THAT WORLD MAY CONTAIN HUMAN LIFE SIMILAR TO THAT WE ONCE SERVED!
YES--BUT, SO HAVE MANY OTHER WORLDS WHICH WE HAVE DISCOVERED...
AND, NONE OF THEM THUS FAR HAD SPAWNED THE TYPE OF SUPER-BEING WHICH IXAR SEEKS!
THUS, AS THE FEMALE ULTROID CONCLUDES HER FANTASTIC NARRATIVE...
OUR SCANNER-BEAMS FOCUSED FIRST ON THE PAIR KNOWN AS QUICKSILVER AND THE SCARLET WITCH--AND WE SOON LEARNED THEY WERE BUT TWO OF A GROUP OF SO-CALLED "SUPER-HEROES"!
IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER FOR OUR ADVANCED SCIENCE TO BRING ABOUT YOUR DOWNFALL--BUT, BY ASSIMILATING ALL YOUR POWERS, WE SHALL BECOME IXAR'S INVINCIBLE LEGION!
THANKS FOR THE FAIRY TALE, LADY--
NOW, HOW ABOUT CLEARIN' OUT AND LETTING US DIE IN PEACE? OR, ARE YOU TRYING TO TALK US TO DEATH?
WE'VE GOT ONE LAST-DITCH CHANCE--BUT ONLY IF MOST OF THE ULTROIDS LEAVE! THEN--WAIT! WHAT'S THAT RUMBLING NOISE?
RUMM
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE IMMENSE CRAFT...
PREPARE FOR LIFT-OFF! OUR BUSINESS ON THIS PRIMITIVE GLOBE IS FINISHED--WE MUST BE UNDER WAY!
SECONDS LATER, LEAVING BEHIND THE ENORMOUS SHELL WHICH HAD COVERED THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN VILLAGE, THE DISC-SHAPED SHIP DEPARTS FROM THE EARTH AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS IT HAD COME...
HOWEVER, IT TAKES WITH IT A HALF-DOZEN UNWILLING PASSENGERS--ONE OF WHOM HAS JUST HAD AN INSPIRATION...
I DON'T DARE SPEAK TO THE OTHERS--'CAUSE I CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE ON IXAR OR ONE OF HIS ULTROID STOOGES HEARING ME!
BUT, IF THIS FANCY CYLINDER HASN'T DRAINED SO MUCH OF MY POWER THAT I CAN'T CONCENTRATE, WE MIGHT JUST HAVE A TRUMP CARD!


ACCORDING TO ULTRANA, THESE CYLINDERS WERE TREATED ACCORDING TO INFO GAINED FROM **WANDA** AND **PIETRO!**
BUT, THERE'S **ONE** LITTLE FACT THAT EVEN **THOSE TWO** DON'T KNOW...
WHICH IS-- THAT I RECENTLY REGAINED MY **SIZE-CHANGING POWER!**
IT **WORKED!** IT TAKES THAT **ASSIMILATOR** GADGET A WHILE TO **WARM UP**... WHICH GIVES US HALF A **CHANCE!**
THIS **OXYGEN TUBING** IS A TIGHT SQUEEZE --BUT, IT'LL BE WORTH IT IF I CAN TAKE OUR LONE REMAINING GUARD BY **SURPRISE!**
POOR **JAN!** USUALLY, THIS IS **HER** TRICK-- BUT, THE TUBE IN HER CYLINDER WAS COVERED BY A **FINE SCREEN!**
BUT, AT THE SAME INSTANT THAT HANK PYM EMERGES-- **ANT-SIZE**-- FROM THE CONFINING CAPSULE...
THE CAGE OF THE **GIANT HUMAN**-- IT IS **EMPTY!**
HE MUST HAVE **ESCAPED!** BUT-- **HOW??** IT IS **IMPOSSIBLE!**
I MUST SOUND THE **ALARM**-- BEFORE HE CAN GET **FAR**--
NO NEED FOR **THAT**, CHUM! **I'M** NOT GOIN' ANYWHERE-- BUT **YOU** ARE!
SOMEONE-- TAPPING ME ON THE **SHOULDER!** YET, I SEE **NO ONE!** WHO--?
THE NEXT MOMENT, THE UNGAINLY ULTROID IS STARTLED, AS A **10-FOOT FIGURE** SUDDENLY MATERIALIZES BEFORE HIS EYES, AND...
I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO STRAIN YOUR DELICATE **EYES**, UGLY --SO, I'LL MAKE MYSELF JUST A WEE BIT **BIGGER!**
THE BETTER TO **SWAT** YOU WITH, LIKE THEY SAY!
SLAM!
UNNNH!
OKAY, CAP-- IT'S **SHOW TIME!**
C'MON OUT AND **PLAY!**
ALWAYS GLAD TO **OBLIGE**, BIG MAN! **THANKS!**
JUST LET ME PICK UP MY **SHIELD** OVER THERE, AND I'M WITH **YOU!**
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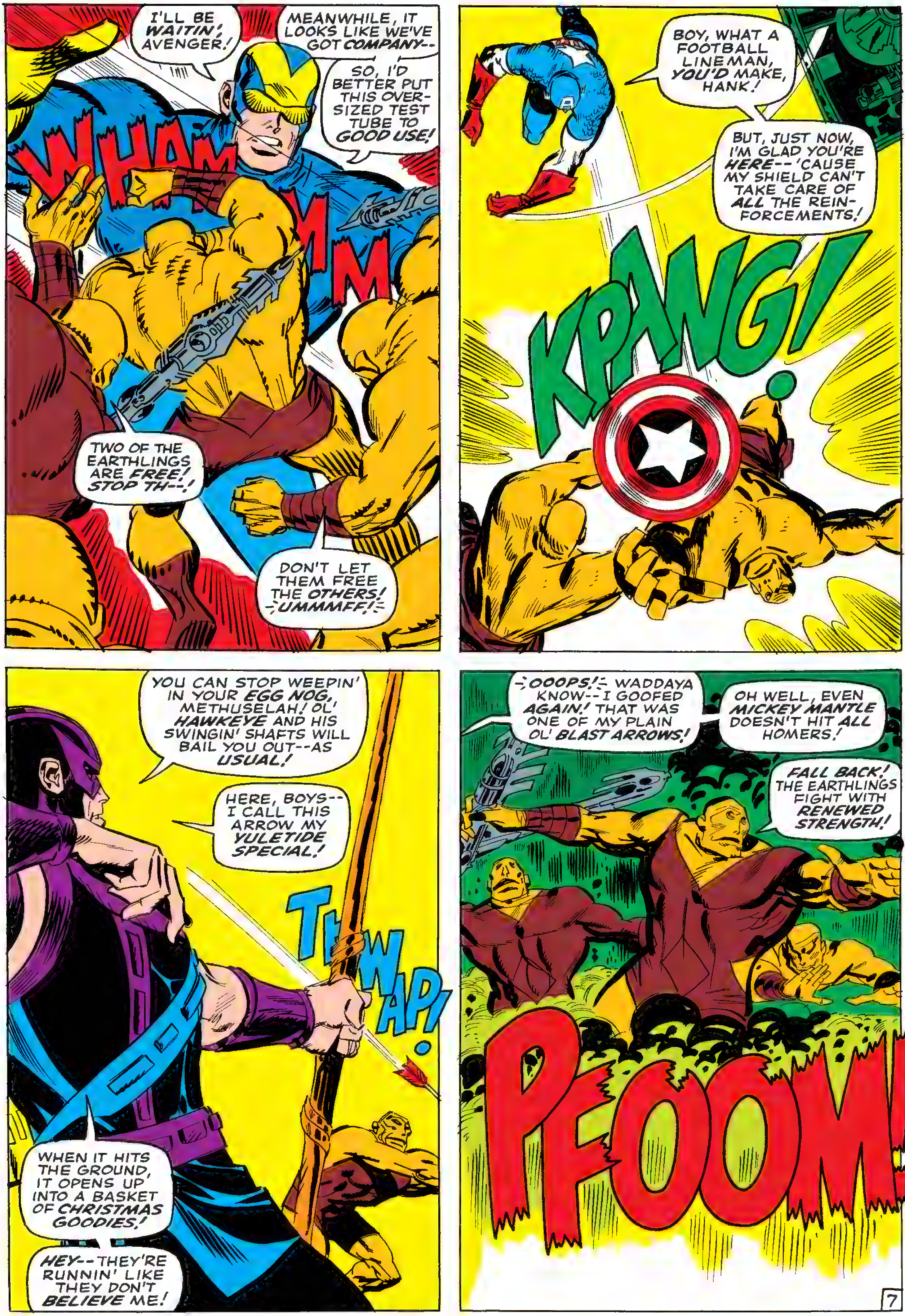
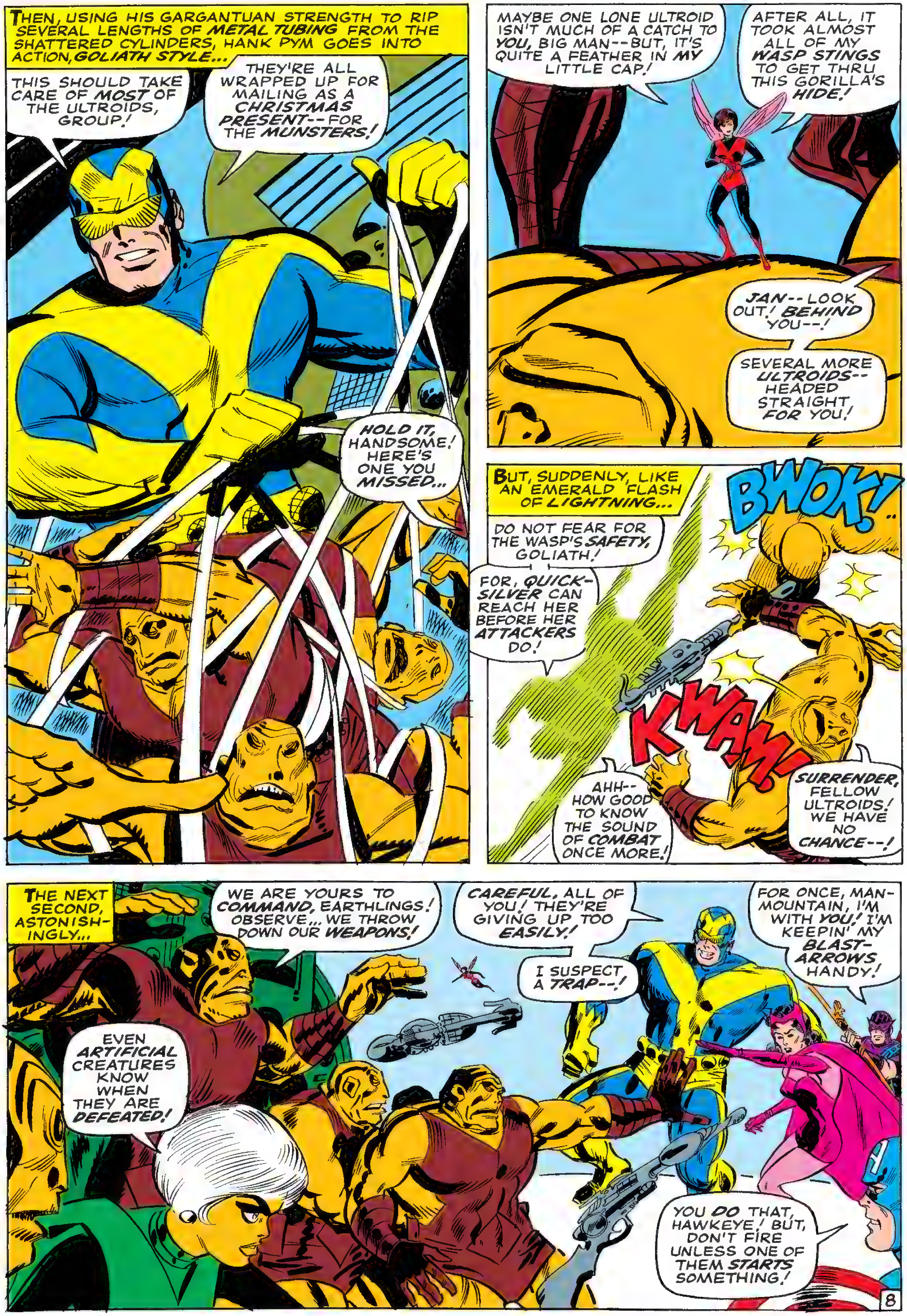
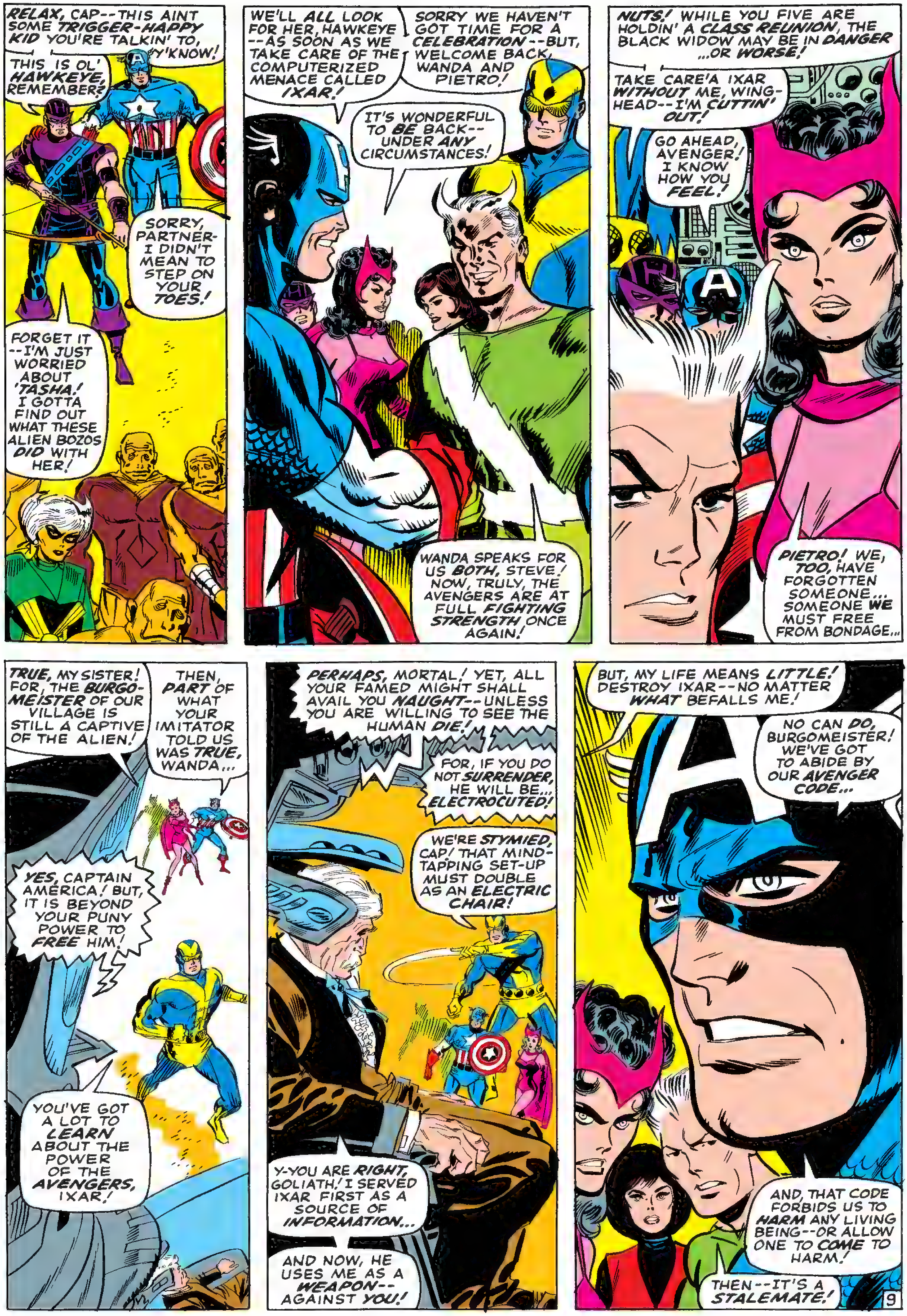
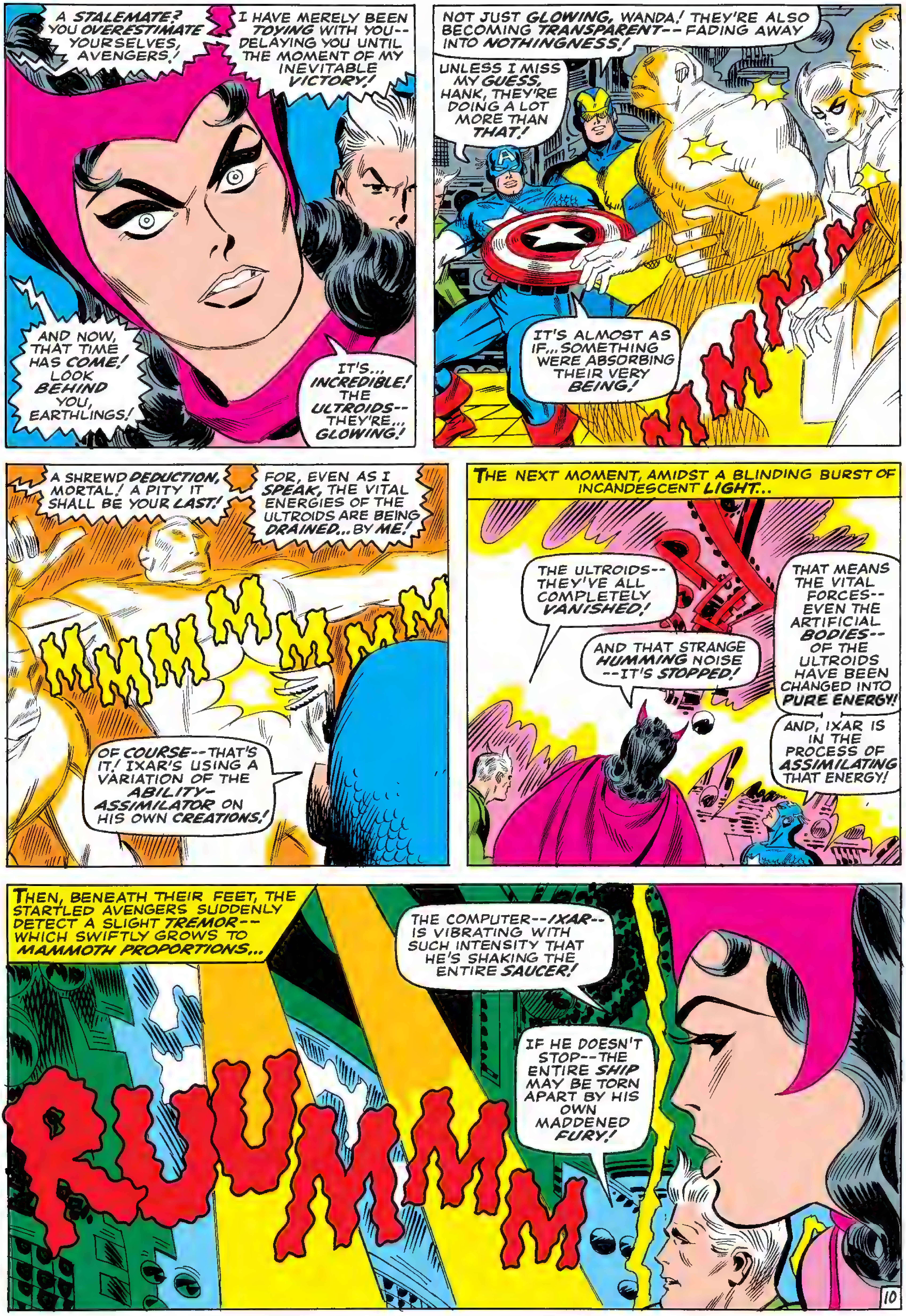
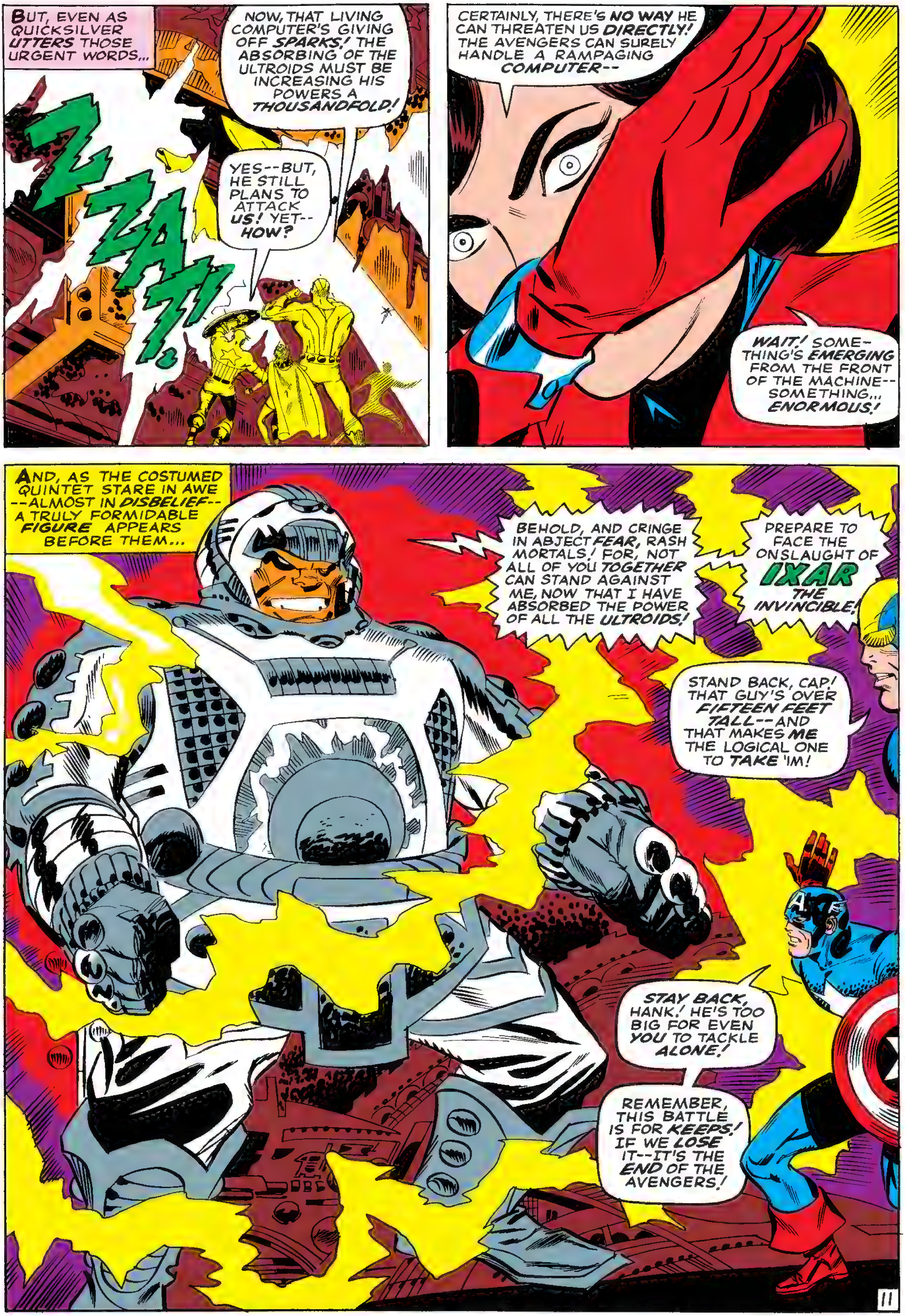
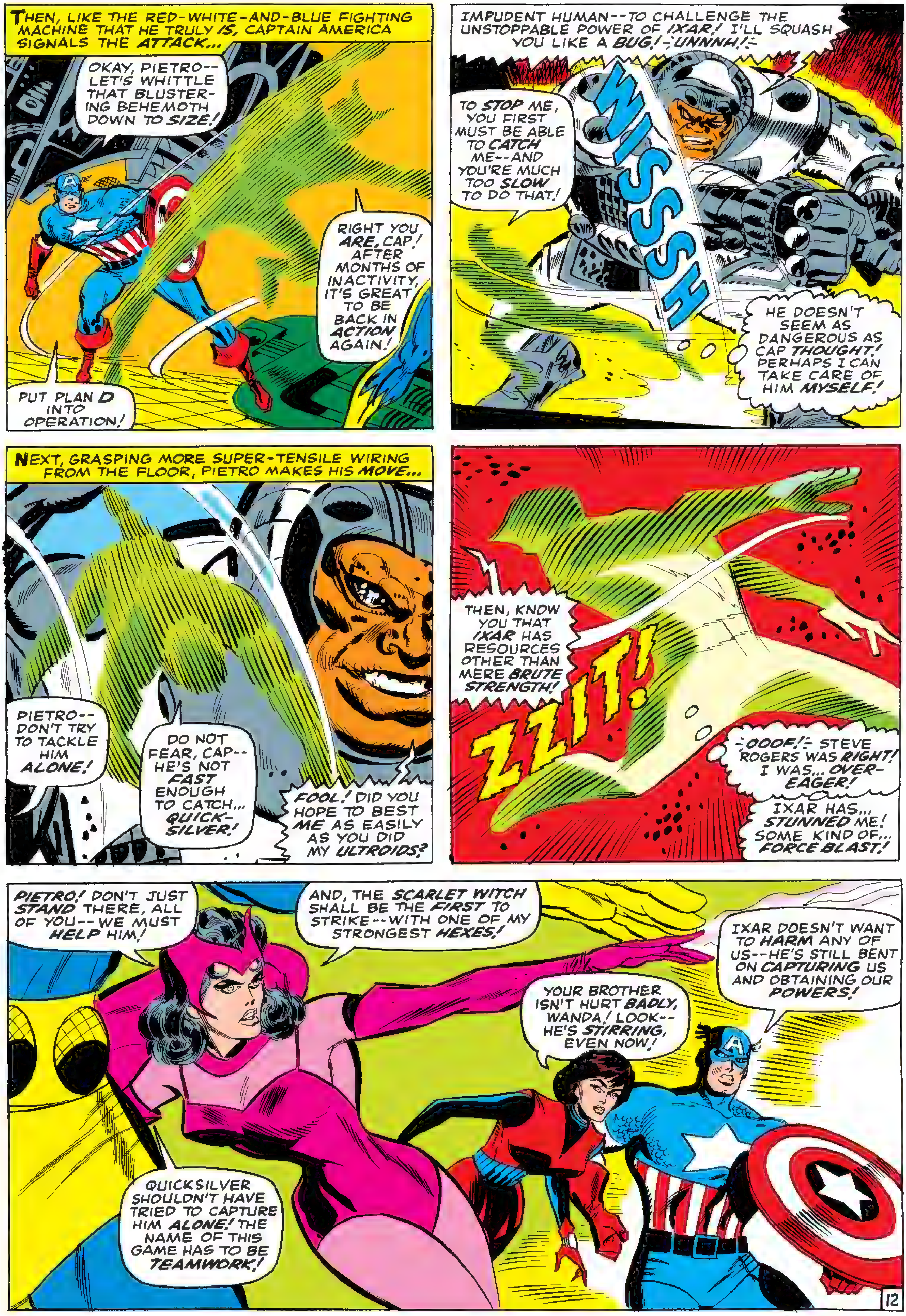

I'LL BE WAITIN', AVENGER!
MEANWHILE, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT COMPANY--
SO, I'D BETTER PUT THIS OVER-SIZED TEST TUBE TO GOOD USE!
WHAMMM
TWO OF THE EARTHLINGS ARE FREE! STOP TH--!
DON'T LET THEM FREE THE OTHERS! -UMMMFF!-
BOY, WHAT A FOOTBALL LINEMAN, YOU'D MAKE, HANK!
BUT, JUST NOW, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE--'CAUSE MY SHIELD CAN'T TAKE CARE OF ALL THE REIN-FORCEMENTS!
KPANG!
YOU CAN STOP WEEPIN' IN YOUR EGG NOG, METHUSELAH! OL' HAWKEYE AND HIS SWINGIN' SHAFTS WILL BAIL YOU OUT--AS USUAL!
HERE, BOYS-- I CALL THIS ARROW MY YULETIDE SPECIAL!
THWAP!
WHEN IT HITS THE GROUND, IT OPENS UP INTO A BASKET OF CHRISTMAS GOODIES!
HEY--THEY'RE RUNNIN' LIKE THEY DON'T BELIEVE ME!
-OOOPS!- WADDAYA KNOW--I GOOFED AGAIN! THAT WAS ONE OF MY PLAIN OL' BLAST ARROWS!
OH WELL, EVEN MICKEY MANTLE DOESN'T HIT ALL HOMERS!
FALL BACK! THE EARTHLINGS FIGHT WITH RENEWED STRENGTH!
PFOOM!

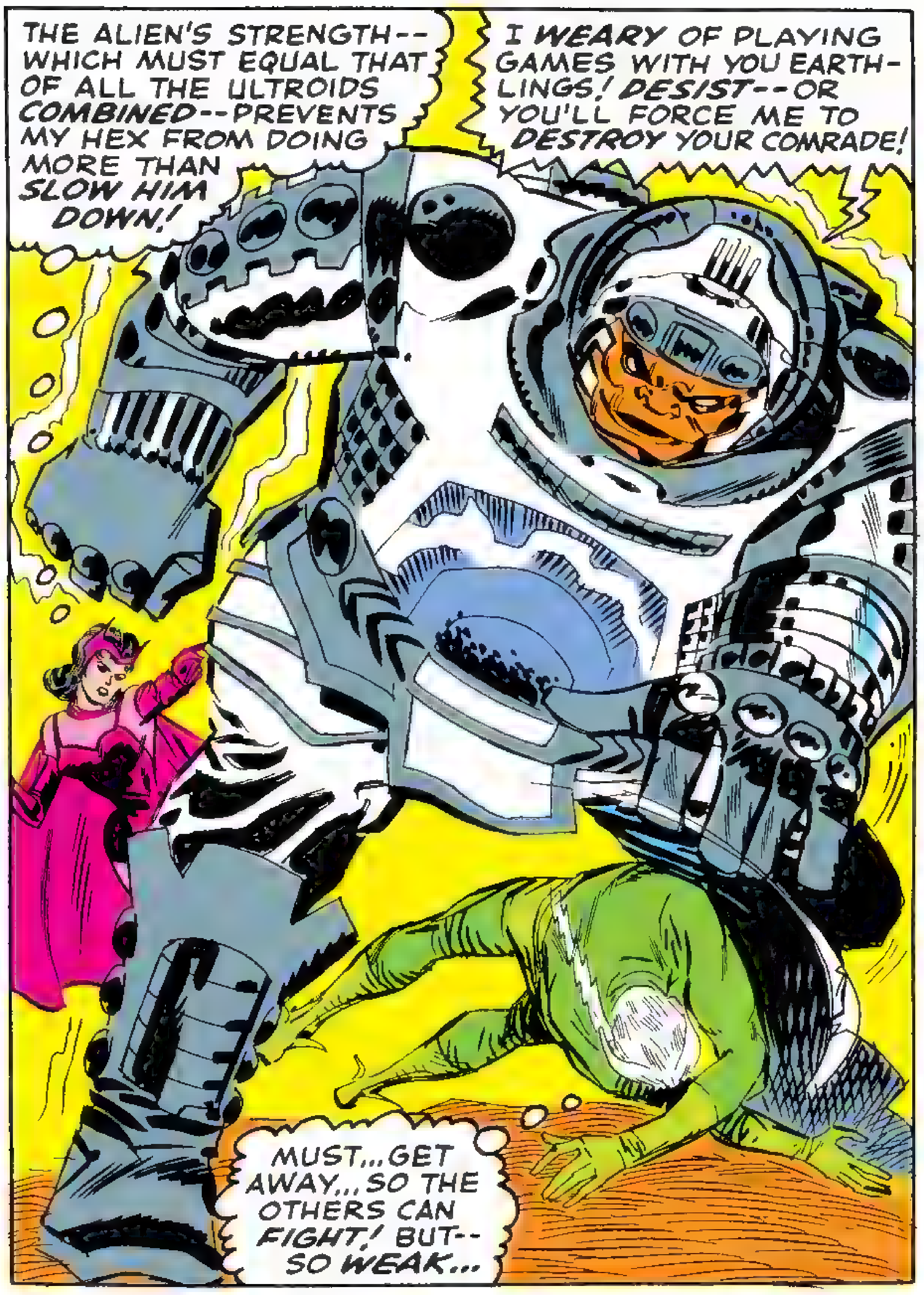

THEN, USING HIS GARGANTUAN STRENGTH TO RIP SEVERAL LENGTHS OF *METAL TUBING* FROM THE SHATTERED CYLINDERS, HANK PYM GOES INTO ACTION, *GOLIATH STYLE...*
THIS SHOULD TAKE CARE OF *MOST* OF THE ULTROIDS, GROUP!
THEY'RE ALL WRAPPED UP FOR MAILING AS A *CHRISTMAS PRESENT*--FOR THE *MUNSTERS!*
HOLD IT, HANDSOME! HERE'S ONE YOU *MISSED...*
MAYBE ONE LONE ULTROID ISN'T MUCH OF A CATCH TO *YOU*, BIG MAN--BUT, IT'S QUITE A FEATHER IN *MY* LITTLE CAP!
AFTER ALL, IT TOOK ALMOST ALL OF MY *WASP STINGS* TO GET THRU THIS GORILLA'S *HIDE!*
JAN--LOOK OUT! *BEHIND* YOU--!
SEVERAL MORE *ULTROIDS*--HEADED STRAIGHT *FOR* YOU!
BUT, SUDDENLY, LIKE AN EMERALD FLASH OF *LIGHTNING...*
BWOK!
DO NOT FEAR FOR THE WASP'S *SAFETY*, GOLIATH!
FOR, *QUICKSILVER* CAN REACH HER BEFORE HER *ATTACKERS* DO!
KWAM!
AHH--HOW GOOD TO KNOW THE SOUND OF *COMBAT* ONCE MORE!
SURRENDER, FELLOW ULTROIDS! WE HAVE NO *CHANCE*--!
THE NEXT SECOND, ASTONISHINGLY...
WE ARE YOURS TO *COMMAND*, EARTHLINGS! OBSERVE... WE THROW DOWN OUR *WEAPONS!*
CAREFUL, ALL OF YOU! THEY'RE GIVING UP TOO *EASILY!*
I SUSPECT A *TRAP*--!
FOR ONCE, MAN-MOUNTAIN, I'M WITH *YOU!* I'M KEEPIN' MY *BLAST-ARROWS* HANDY!
EVEN *ARTIFICIAL* CREATURES KNOW WHEN THEY ARE *DEFEATED!*
YOU *DO* THAT, HAWKEYE! BUT, DON'T FIRE UNLESS ONE OF THEM *STARTS* SOMETHING!

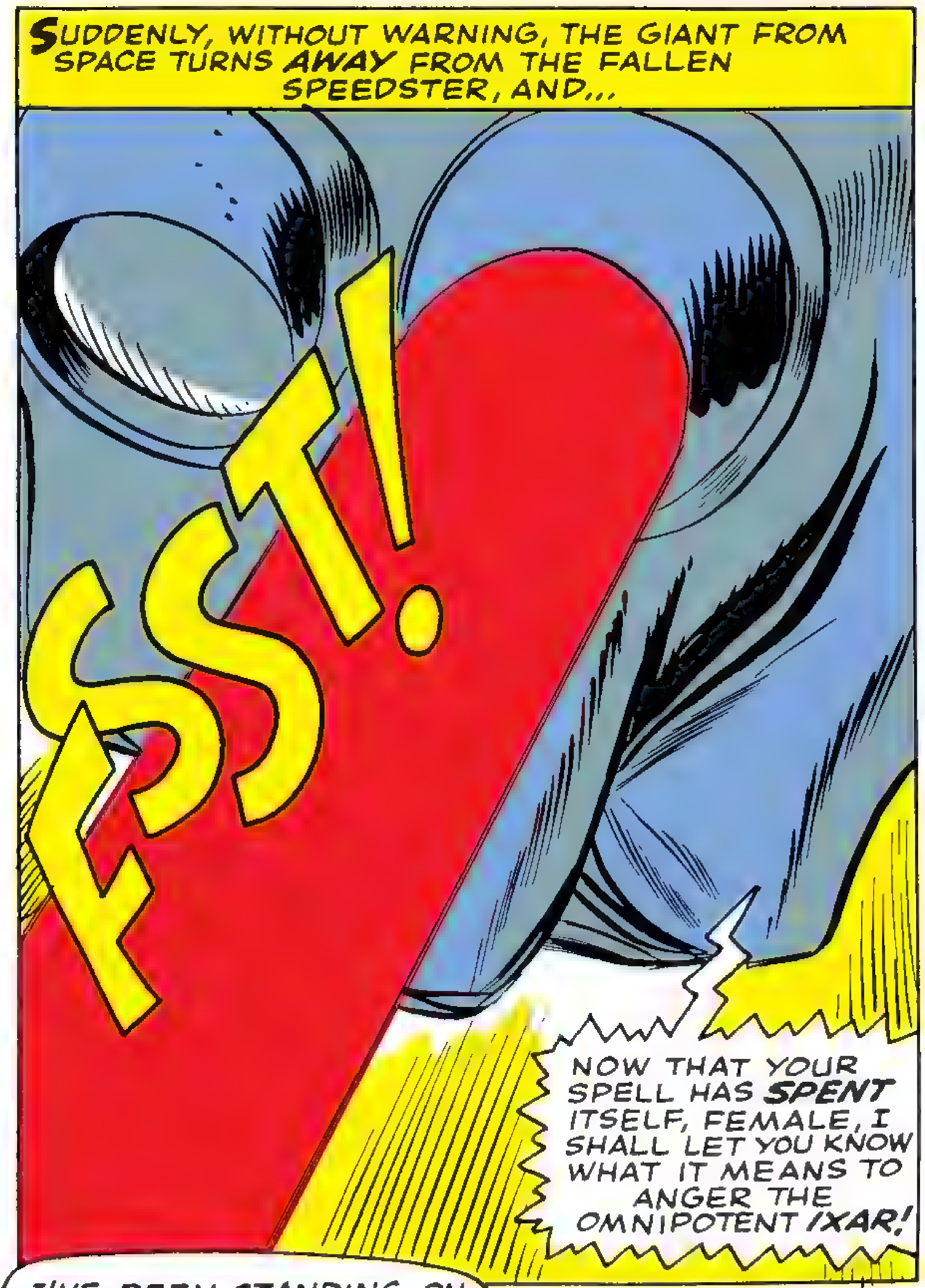

RELAX, CAP--THIS AINT SOME TRIGGER-HAPPY KID YOU'RE TALKIN' TO, Y'KNOW!
THIS IS OL' HAWKEYE, REMEMBER?
SORRY, PARTNER-I DIDN'T MEAN TO STEP ON YOUR TOES!
FORGET IT --I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT 'TASHA! I GOTTA FIND OUT WHAT THESE ALIEN BOZOS DID WITH HER!
WE'LL ALL LOOK FOR HER, HAWKEYE --AS SOON AS WE TAKE CARE OF THE COMPUTERIZED MENACE CALLED IXAR!
SORRY WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR A CELEBRATION--BUT, WELCOME BACK, WANDA AND PIETRO!
IT'S WONDERFUL TO BE BACK-- UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!
WANDA SPEAKS FOR US BOTH, STEVE! NOW, TRULY, THE AVENGERS ARE AT FULL FIGHTING STRENGTH ONCE AGAIN!
NUTS! WHILE YOU FIVE ARE HOLDIN' A CLASS REUNION, THE BLACK WIDOW MAY BE IN DANGER ...OR WORSE!
TAKE CARE'A IXAR WITHOUT ME, WING-HEAD--I'M CUTTIN' OUT!
GO AHEAD, AVENGER! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL!
PIETRO! WE, TOO, HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMEONE... SOMEONE WE MUST FREE FROM BONDAGE...
TRUE, MY SISTER! FOR, THE BURGOMEISTER OF OUR VILLAGE IS STILL A CAPTIVE OF THE ALIEN!
THEN, PART OF WHAT YOUR IMITATOR TOLD US WAS TRUE, WANDA...
YES, CAPTAIN AMERICA! BUT, IT IS BEYOND YOUR PUNY POWER TO FREE HIM!
YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT THE POWER OF THE AVENGERS, IXAR!
PERHAPS, MORTAL! YET, ALL YOUR FAMED MIGHT SHALL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT--UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO SEE THE HUMAN DIE!
FOR, IF YOU DO NOT SURRENDER, HE WILL BE... ELECTROCUTED!
WE'RE STYMIED, CAP! THAT MIND-TAPPING SET-UP MUST DOUBLE AS AN ELECTRIC CHAIR!
Y-YOU ARE RIGHT, GOLIATH! I SERVED IXAR FIRST AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION...
AND NOW, HE USES ME AS A WEAPON-- AGAINST YOU!
BUT, MY LIFE MEANS LITTLE! DESTROY IXAR--NO MATTER WHAT BEFALLS ME!
NO CAN DO, BURGOMEISTER! WE'VE GOT TO ABIDE BY OUR AVENGER CODE...
AND, THAT CODE FORBIDS US TO HARM ANY LIVING BEING--OR ALLOW ONE TO COME TO HARM!
THEN--IT'S A STALEMATE!

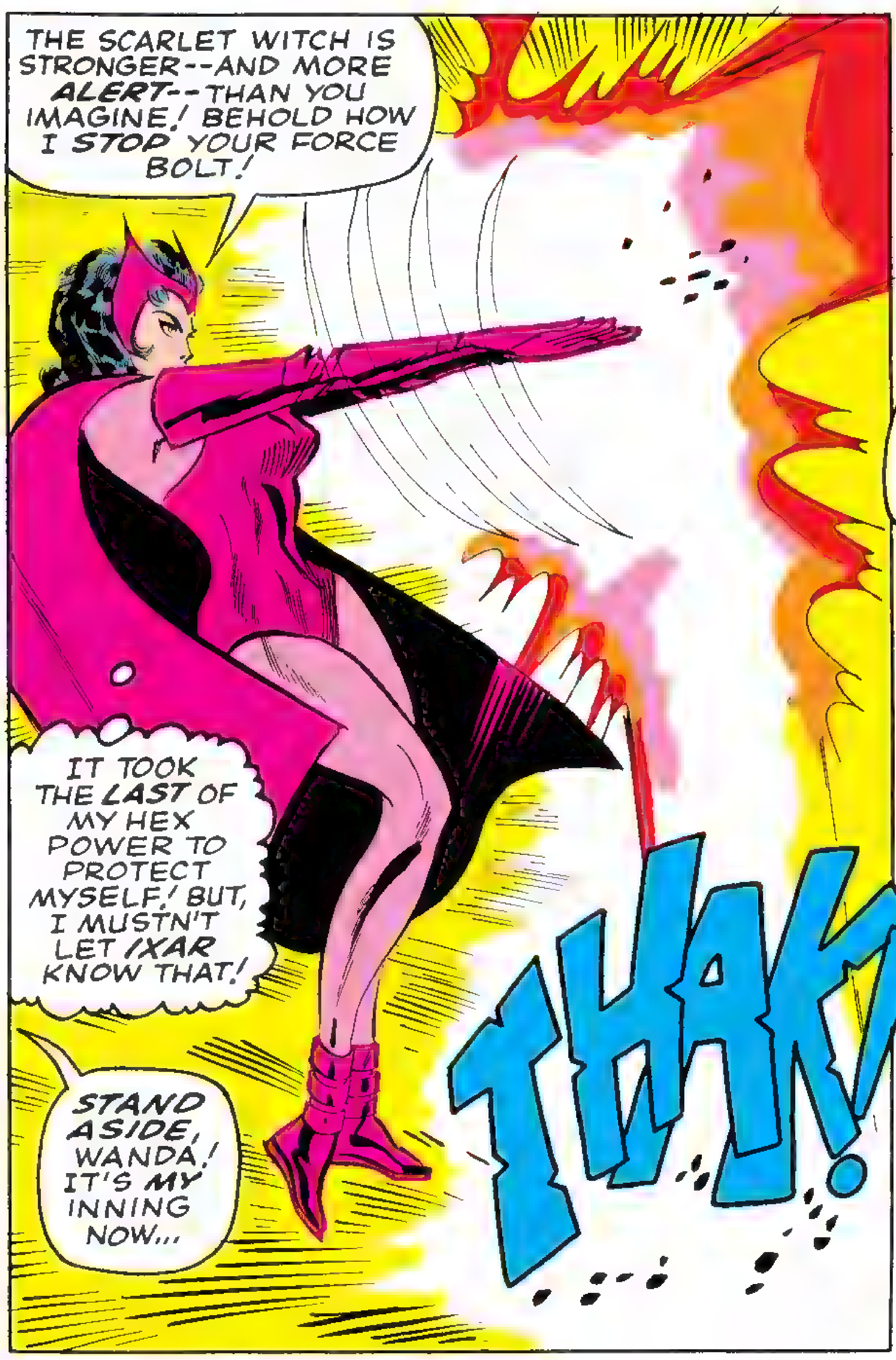

A STALEMATE? YOU OVERESTIMATE YOURSELVES, AVENGERS!
I HAVE MERELY BEEN TOYING WITH YOU--DELAYING YOU UNTIL THE MOMENT OF MY INEVITABLE VICTORY!
AND NOW, THAT TIME HAS COME! LOOK BEHIND YOU, EARTHLINGS!
IT'S... INCREDIBLE! THE ULTROIDS--THEY'RE... GLOWING!
NOT JUST GLOWING, WANDA! THEY'RE ALSO BECOMING TRANSPARENT--FADING AWAY INTO NOTHINGNESS!
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, HANK, THEY'RE DOING A LOT MORE THAN THAT!
IT'S ALMOST AS IF... SOMETHING WERE ABSORBING THEIR VERY BEING!
MMMMMMM
A SHREWD DEDUCTION, MORTAL! A PITY IT SHALL BE YOUR LAST!
FOR, EVEN AS I SPEAK, THE VITAL ENERGIES OF THE ULTROIDS ARE BEING DRAINED... BY ME!
MMMMMMMMM
OF COURSE--THAT'S IT! IXAR'S USING A VARIATION OF THE ABILITY-ASSIMILATOR ON HIS OWN CREATIONS!
THE NEXT MOMENT, AMIDST A BLINDING BURST OF INCANDESCENT LIGHT...
THE ULTROIDS--THEY'VE ALL COMPLETELY VANISHED!
AND THAT STRANGE HUMMING NOISE--IT'S STOPPED!
THAT MEANS THE VITAL FORCES--EVEN THE ARTIFICIAL BODIES--OF THE ULTROIDS HAVE BEEN CHANGED INTO PURE ENERGY!
AND, IXAR IS IN THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATING THAT ENERGY!
THEN, BENEATH THEIR FEET, THE STARTLED AVENGERS SUDDENLY DETECT A SLIGHT TREMOR--WHICH SWIFTLY GROWS TO MAMMOTH PROPORTIONS...
THE COMPUTER--IXAR--IS VIBRATING WITH SUCH INTENSITY THAT HE'S SHAKING THE ENTIRE SAUCER!
IF HE DOESN'T STOP--THE ENTIRE SHIP MAY BE TORN APART BY HIS OWN MADDENED FURY!
RUUMMM

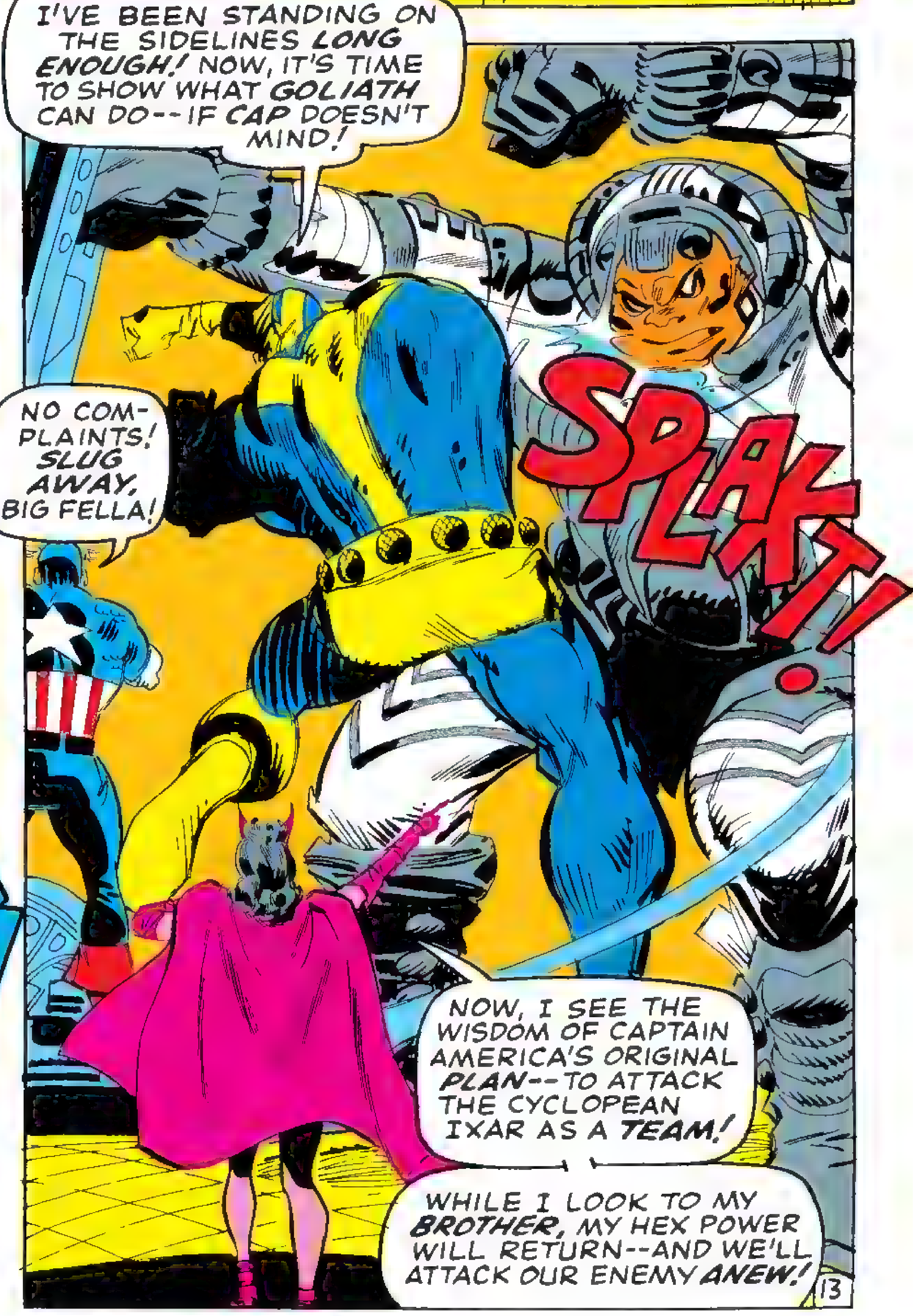

BUT, EVEN AS QUICKSILVER *UTTERS* THOSE URGENT WORDS...
NOW, THAT LIVING COMPUTER'S GIVING OFF *SPARKS!* THE ABSORBING OF THE ULTROIDS MUST BE INCREASING HIS POWERS A *THOUSANDFOLD!*
ZZZAT!!
YES--BUT, HE STILL PLANS TO ATTACK *US!* YET-- *HOW?*
CERTAINLY, THERE'S *NO WAY* HE CAN THREATEN US *DIRECTLY!* THE AVENGERS CAN SURELY HANDLE A RAMPAGING *COMPUTER--*
WAIT! SOMETHING'S *EMERGING* FROM THE FRONT OF THE MACHINE-- SOMETHING... *ENORMOUS!*
AND, AS THE COSTUMED QUINTET STARE IN AWE --ALMOST IN *DISBELIEF*-- A TRULY FORMIDABLE *FIGURE* APPEARS BEFORE THEM...
BEHOLD, AND CRINGE IN ABJECT *FEAR,* RASH MORTALS! FOR, NOT ALL OF YOU *TOGETHER* CAN STAND AGAINST ME, NOW THAT I HAVE ABSORBED THE POWER OF ALL THE *ULTROIDS!*
PREPARE TO FACE THE ONSLAUGHT OF *IXAR THE INVINCIBLE!*
STAND BACK, CAP! THAT GUY'S OVER *FIFTEEN FEET TALL*--AND THAT MAKES *ME* THE LOGICAL ONE TO *TAKE* 'IM!
STAY BACK, HANK! HE'S TOO BIG FOR EVEN *YOU* TO TACKLE *ALONE!*
REMEMBER, THIS BATTLE IS FOR *KEEPS!* IF WE *LOSE* IT--IT'S THE *END* OF THE AVENGERS!

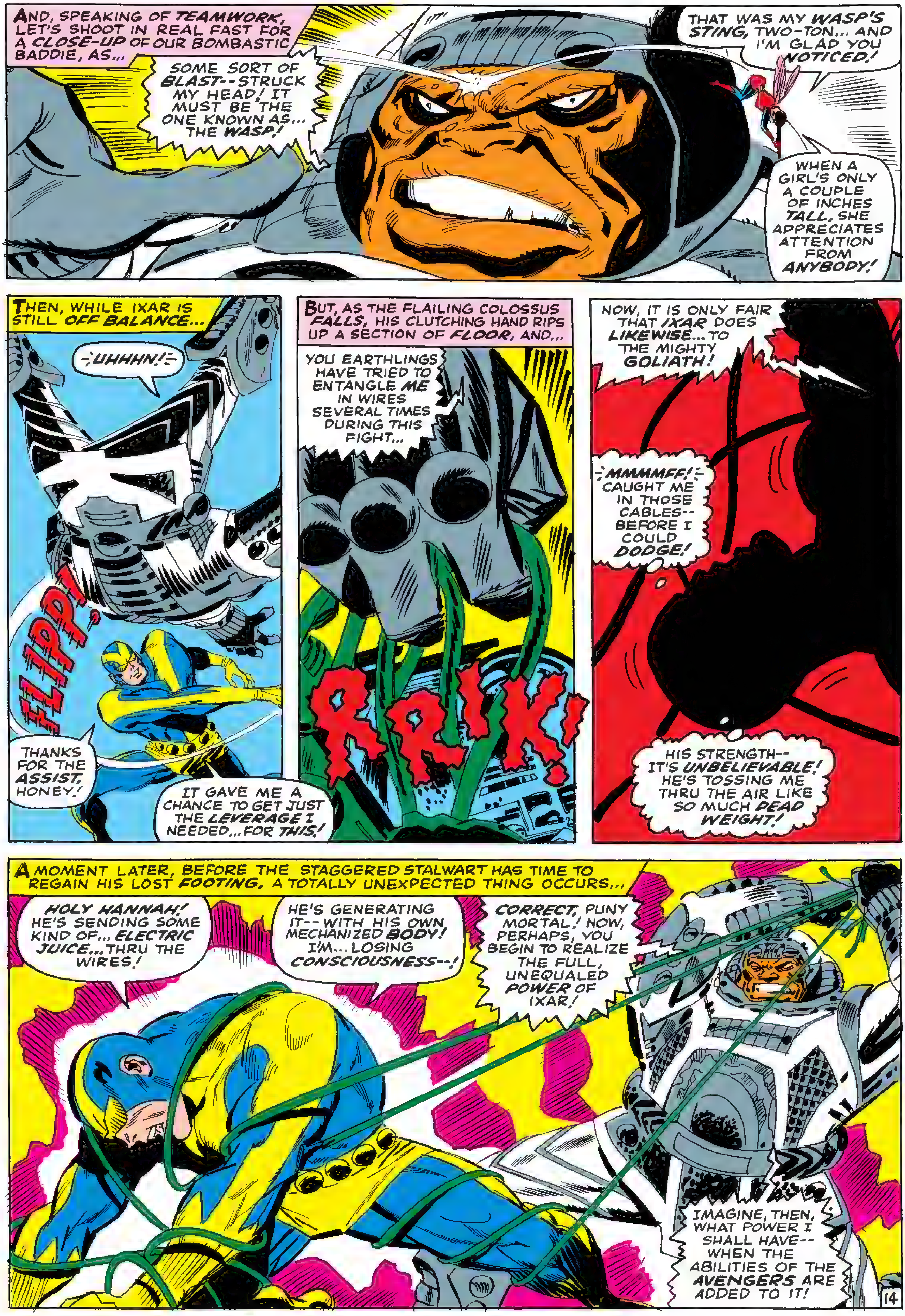

THEN, LIKE THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE FIGHTING MACHINE THAT HE TRULY *IS*, CAPTAIN AMERICA SIGNALS THE *ATTACK...*
OKAY, PIETRO-- LET'S WHITTLE THAT BLUSTERING BEHEMOTH DOWN TO *SIZE!*
RIGHT YOU *ARE*, CAP! AFTER MONTHS OF INACTIVITY, IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN *ACTION* AGAIN!
PUT PLAN *D* INTO OPERATION!
IMPUDENT HUMAN--TO CHALLENGE THE UNSTOPPABLE POWER OF *IXAR!* I'LL SQUASH YOU LIKE A *BUG!* -*UNNNH!*-
TO *STOP* ME, YOU FIRST MUST BE ABLE TO *CATCH* ME--AND YOU'RE MUCH TOO *SLOW* TO DO THAT!
WISSSH
HE DOESN'T SEEM AS DANGEROUS AS CAP *THOUGHT!* PERHAPS I CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM *MYSELF!*
NEXT, GRASPING MORE SUPER-TENSILE WIRING FROM THE FLOOR, PIETRO MAKES HIS *MOVE...*
PIETRO-- DON'T TRY TO TACKLE HIM *ALONE!*
DO NOT FEAR, CAP-- HE'S NOT *FAST* ENOUGH TO CATCH... *QUICKSILVER!*
FOOL! DID YOU HOPE TO BEST *ME* AS EASILY AS YOU DID MY *ULTROIDS?*
THEN, KNOW YOU THAT *IXAR* HAS RESOURCES OTHER THAN MERE *BRUTE STRENGTH!*
ZZIT!
-*OOOF!*- STEVE ROGERS WAS *RIGHT!* I WAS... *OVER-EAGER!*
IXAR HAS... *STUNNED* ME! SOME KIND OF... *FORCE BLAST!*
PIETRO! DON'T JUST STAND THERE, ALL OF YOU--WE MUST *HELP* HIM!
AND, THE *SCARLET WITCH* SHALL BE THE *FIRST* TO STRIKE--WITH ONE OF MY STRONGEST *HEXES!*
IXAR DOESN'T WANT TO *HARM* ANY OF US--HE'S STILL BENT ON *CAPTURING* US AND OBTAINING OUR *POWERS!*
YOUR BROTHER ISN'T HURT *BADLY*, WANDA! LOOK-- HE'S *STIRRING*, EVEN NOW!
QUICKSILVER SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIED TO CAPTURE HIM *ALONE!* THE NAME OF THIS GAME HAS TO BE *TEAMWORK!*

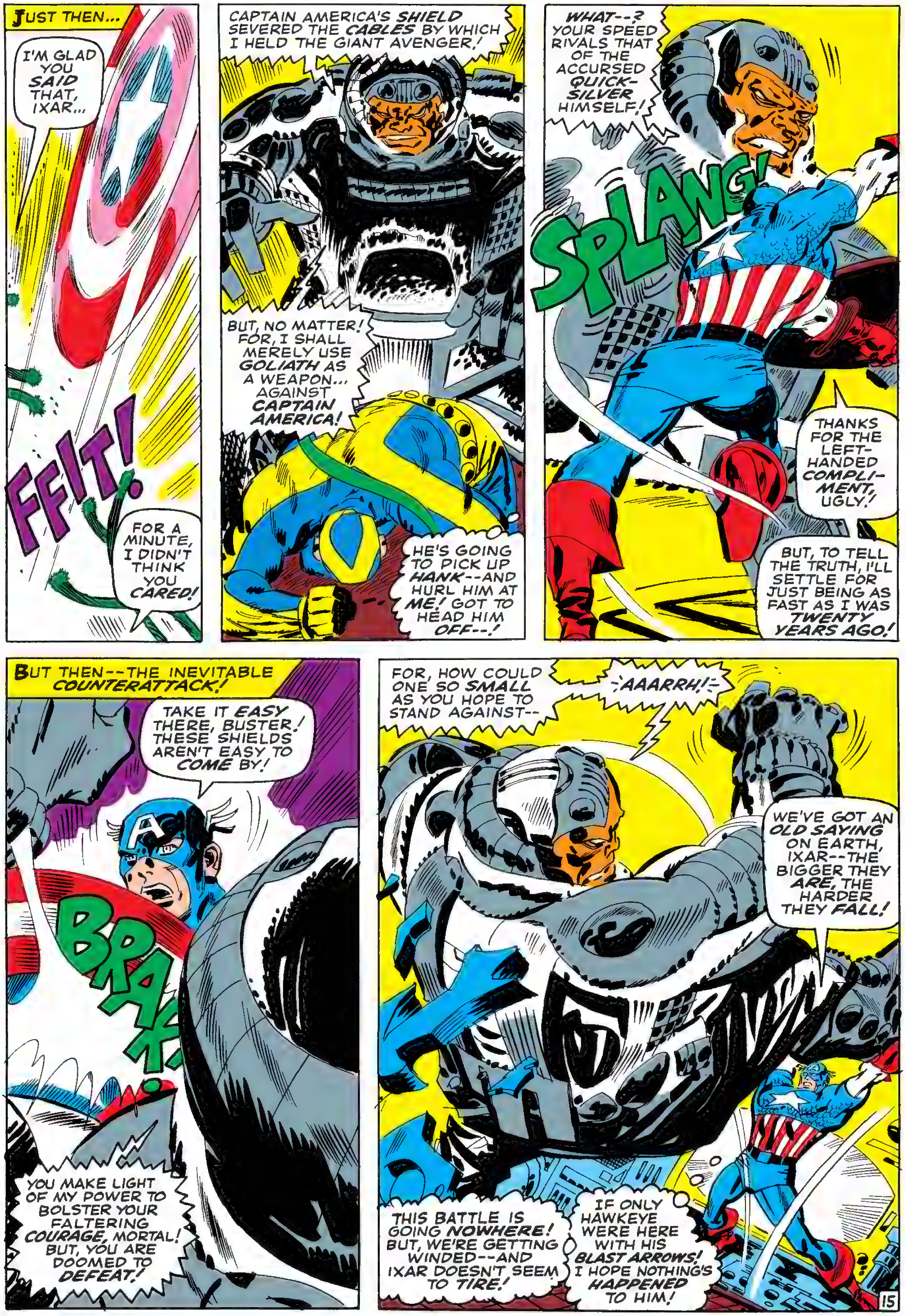

THE ALIEN'S STRENGTH-- WHICH MUST EQUAL THAT OF ALL THE ULTROIDS COMBINED--PREVENTS MY HEX FROM DOING MORE THAN SLOW HIM DOWN!
I WEARY OF PLAYING GAMES WITH YOU EARTHLINGS! DESIST--OR YOU'LL FORCE ME TO DESTROY YOUR COMRADE!
MUST...GET AWAY...SO THE OTHERS CAN FIGHT! BUT-- SO WEAK...

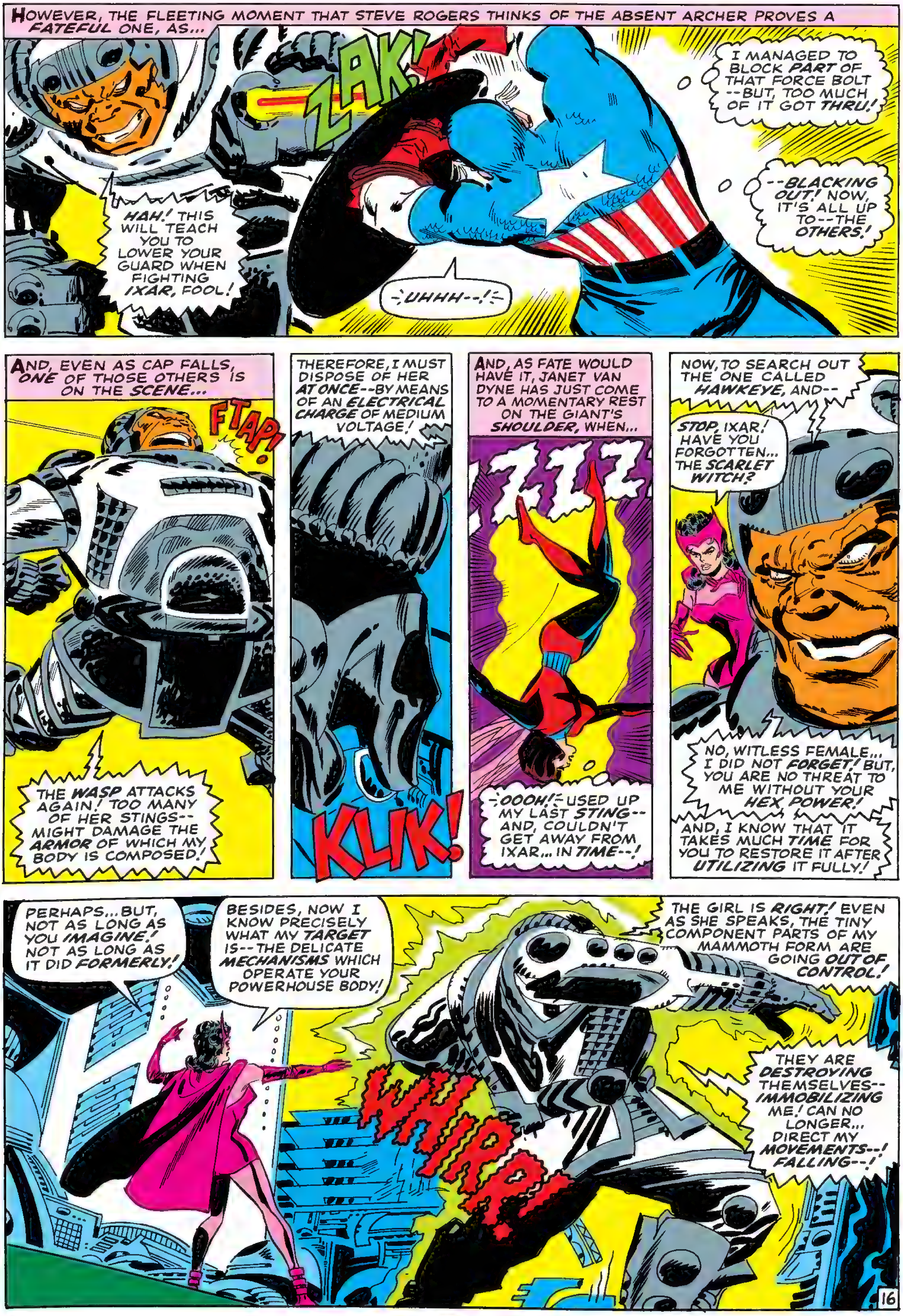

SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING, THE GIANT FROM SPACE TURNS AWAY FROM THE FALLEN SPEEDSTER, AND...
FSST!
NOW THAT YOUR SPELL HAS SPENT ITSELF, FEMALE, I SHALL LET YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO ANGER THE OMNIPOTENT IXAR!

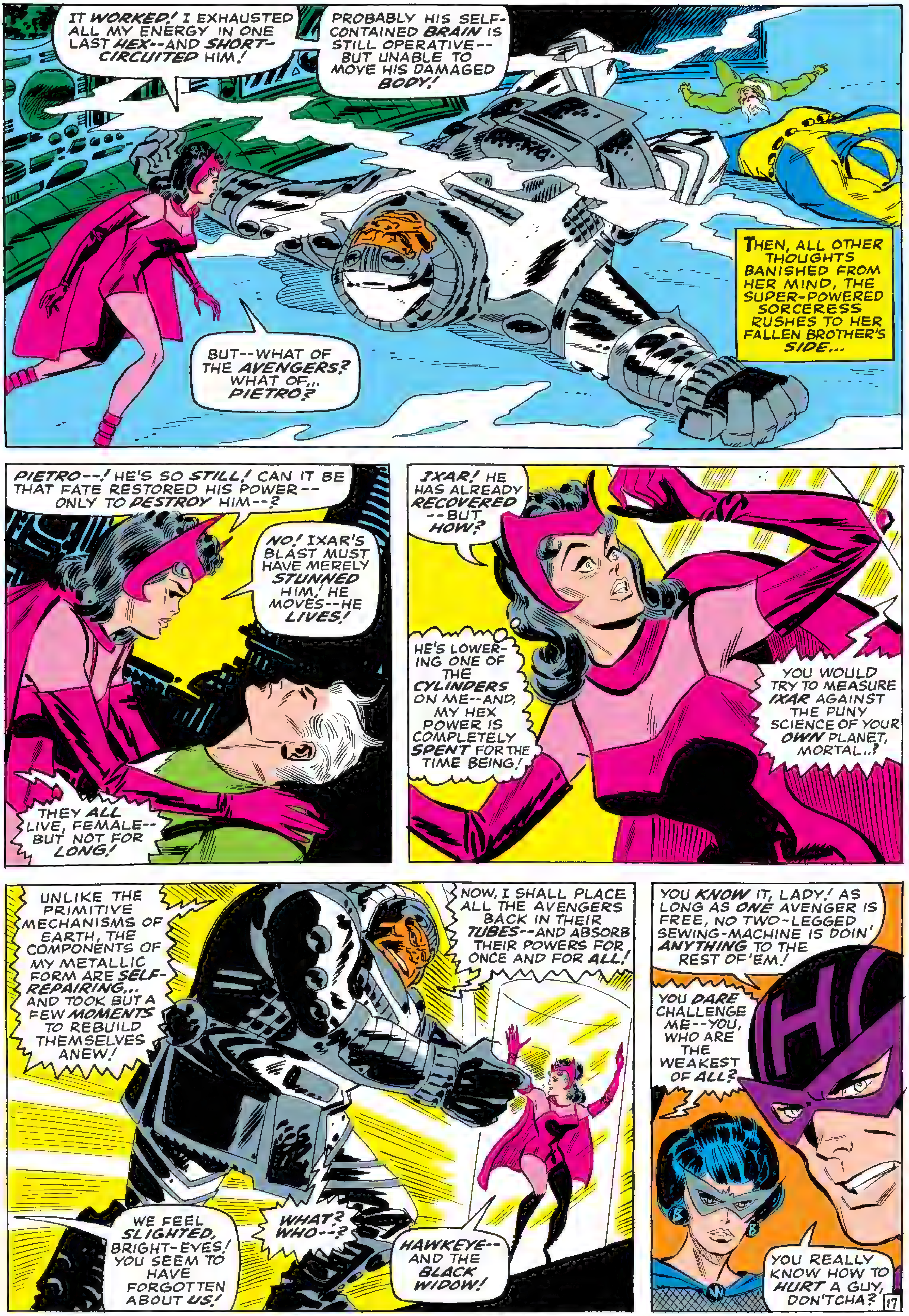

THE SCARLET WITCH IS STRONGER--AND MORE ALERT--THAN YOU IMAGINE! BEHOLD HOW I STOP YOUR FORCE BOLT!
IT TOOK THE LAST OF MY HEX POWER TO PROTECT MYSELF! BUT, I MUSTN'T LET IXAR KNOW THAT!
THAK!
STAND ASIDE, WANDA! IT'S MY INNING NOW...

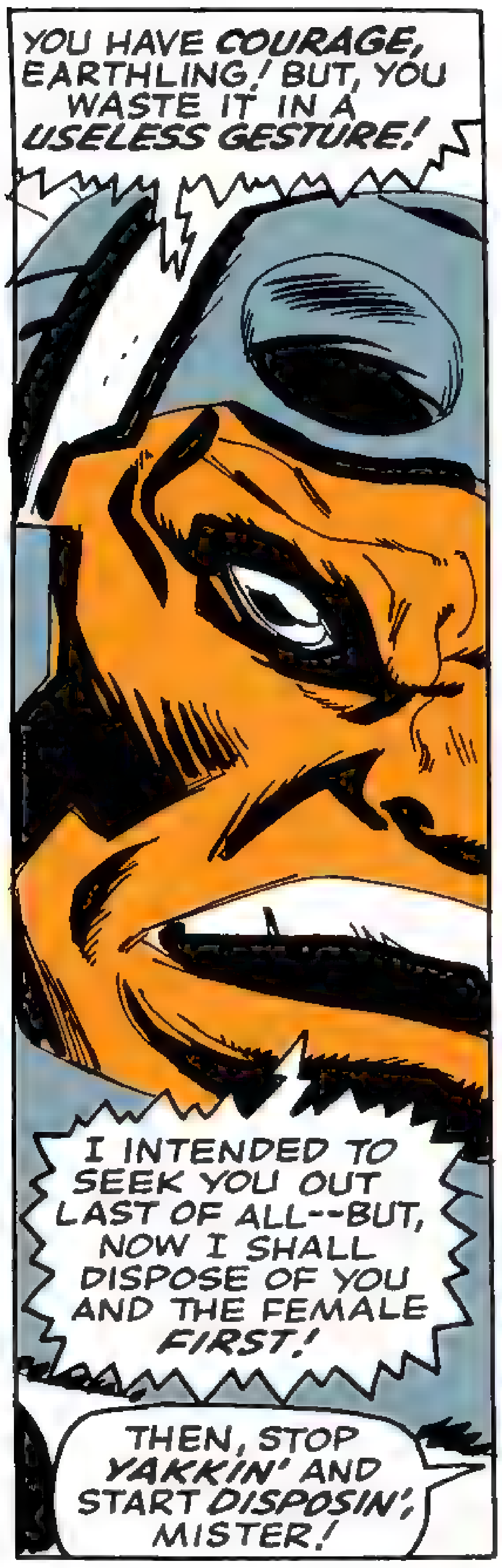

I'VE BEEN STANDING ON THE SIDELINES LONG ENOUGH! NOW, IT'S TIME TO SHOW WHAT GOLIATH CAN DO--IF CAP DOESN'T MIND!
NO COMPLAINTS! SLUG AWAY, BIG FELLA!
SPLAKT!
NOW, I SEE THE WISDOM OF CAPTAIN AMERICA'S ORIGINAL PLAN--TO ATTACK THE CYCLOPEAN IXAR AS A TEAM!
WHILE I LOOK TO MY BROTHER, MY HEX POWER WILL RETURN--AND WE'LL ATTACK OUR ENEMY ANEW!

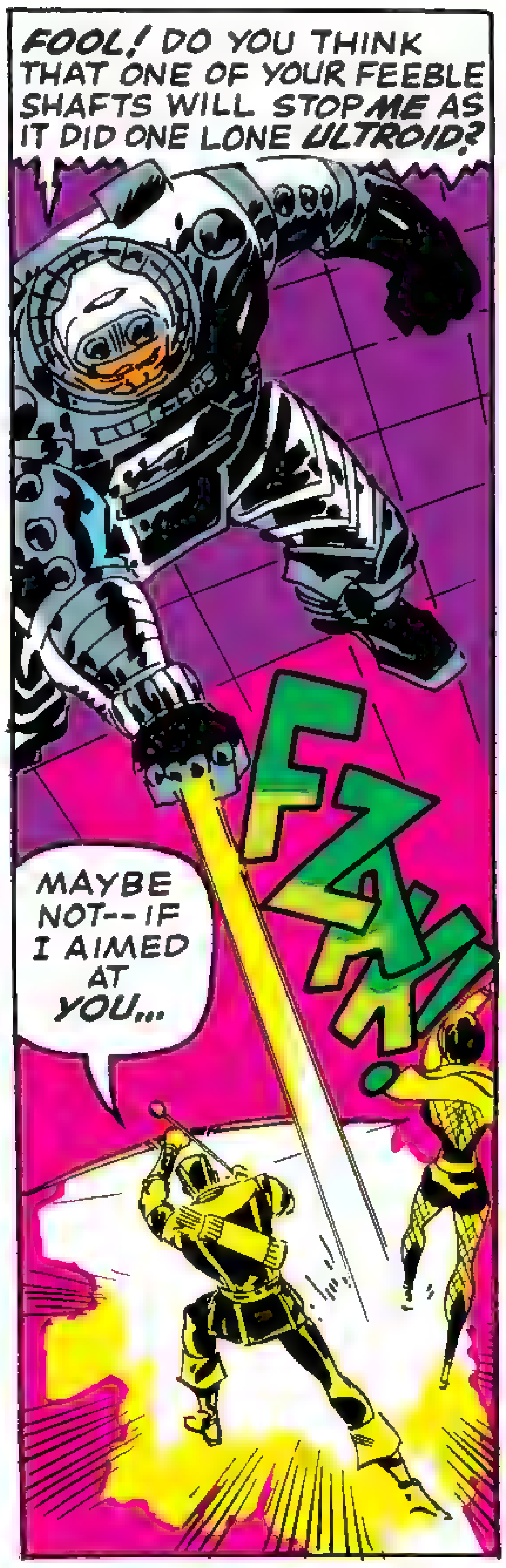

AND, SPEAKING OF *TEAMWORK*, LET'S SHOOT IN REAL FAST FOR A *CLOSE-UP* OF OUR BOMBASTIC BADDIE, AS...
SOME SORT OF *BLAST*--STRUCK MY HEAD! IT MUST BE THE ONE KNOWN AS... THE *WASP!*
THAT WAS MY *WASP'S STING*, TWO-TON... AND I'M GLAD YOU *NOTICED!*
WHEN A GIRL'S ONLY A COUPLE OF INCHES *TALL*, SHE APPRECIATES ATTENTION FROM *ANYBODY!*
THEN, WHILE IXAR IS STILL *OFF BALANCE...*
-UHHHN!-
FLIPP!
THANKS FOR THE *ASSIST*, HONEY!
IT GAVE ME A CHANCE TO GET JUST THE *LEVERAGE* I NEEDED... FOR *THIS!*
BUT, AS THE FLAILING COLOSSUS *FALLS*, HIS CLUTCHING HAND RIPS UP A SECTION OF *FLOOR*, AND...
YOU EARTHLINGS HAVE TRIED TO ENTANGLE *ME* IN WIRES SEVERAL TIMES DURING THIS FIGHT...
RRIK!
NOW, IT IS ONLY FAIR THAT *IXAR* DOES *LIKEWISE*... TO THE MIGHTY *GOLIATH!*
-MMMMFF!- CAUGHT ME IN THOSE CABLES-- BEFORE I COULD *DODGE!*
HIS STRENGTH-- IT'S *UNBELIEVABLE!* HE'S TOSSING ME THRU THE AIR LIKE SO MUCH *DEAD WEIGHT!*
A MOMENT LATER, BEFORE THE STAGGERED STALWART HAS TIME TO REGAIN HIS LOST *FOOTING*, A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED THING OCCURS...
HOLY HANNAH! HE'S SENDING SOME KIND OF... *ELECTRIC JUICE*... THRU THE WIRES!
HE'S GENERATING IT-- WITH HIS OWN, MECHANIZED *BODY!* I'M... LOSING *CONSCIOUSNESS*--!
CORRECT, PUNY MORTAL! NOW, PERHAPS, YOU BEGIN TO REALIZE THE FULL, UNEQUALED *POWER* OF IXAR!
IMAGINE, THEN, WHAT POWER I SHALL HAVE-- WHEN THE ABILITIES OF THE *AVENGERS* ARE ADDED TO IT!

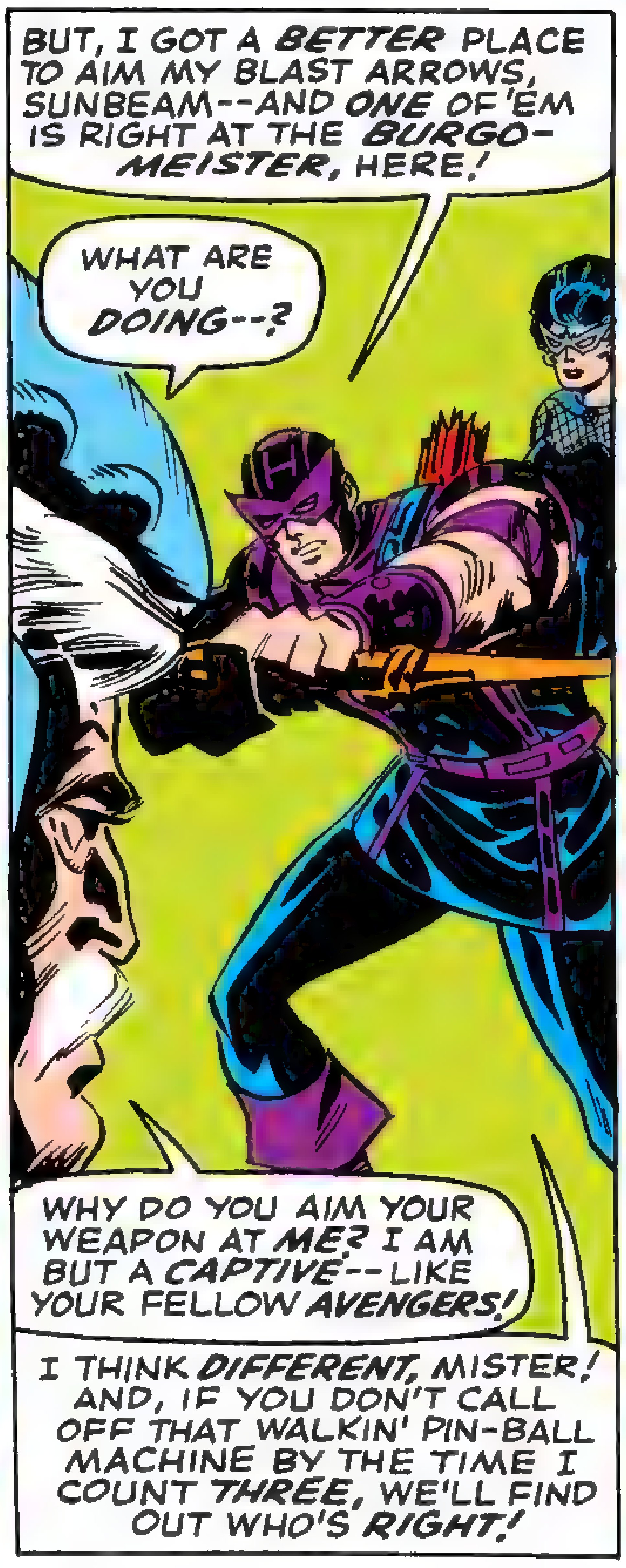

JUST THEN...
I'M GLAD YOU *SAID* THAT, IXAR...
FFIT!
FOR A MINUTE, I DIDN'T THINK YOU *CARED!*
CAPTAIN AMERICA'S *SHIELD* SEVERED THE *CABLES* BY WHICH I HELD THE GIANT AVENGER!
BUT, NO MATTER! FOR, I SHALL MERELY USE *GOLIATH* AS A WEAPON... AGAINST *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*
HE'S GOING TO PICK UP *HANK*--AND HURL HIM AT *ME!* GOT TO HEAD HIM *OFF*--!
WHAT--? YOUR SPEED RIVALS THAT OF THE ACCURSED *QUICKSILVER* HIMSELF!
SPLANG!
THANKS FOR THE LEFT-HANDED *COMPLIMENT,* UGLY!
BUT, TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'LL SETTLE FOR JUST BEING AS FAST AS I WAS *TWENTY YEARS AGO!*
BUT THEN--THE INEVITABLE *COUNTERATTACK!*
TAKE IT *EASY* THERE, BUSTER! THESE SHIELDS AREN'T EASY TO *COME* BY!
BRAK!
YOU MAKE LIGHT OF MY POWER TO BOLSTER YOUR FALTERING *COURAGE,* MORTAL! BUT, YOU ARE DOOMED TO *DEFEAT!*
FOR, HOW COULD ONE SO *SMALL* AS YOU HOPE TO STAND AGAINST--
AAARRH!
WE'VE GOT AN *OLD SAYING* ON EARTH, IXAR--THE BIGGER THEY *ARE,* THE HARDER THEY *FALL!*
THIS BATTLE IS GOING *NOWHERE!* BUT, WE'RE GETTING WINDED--AND IXAR DOESN'T SEEM TO *TIRE!*
IF ONLY HAWKEYE WERE HERE WITH HIS *BLAST ARROWS!* I HOPE NOTHING'S *HAPPENED* TO HIM!

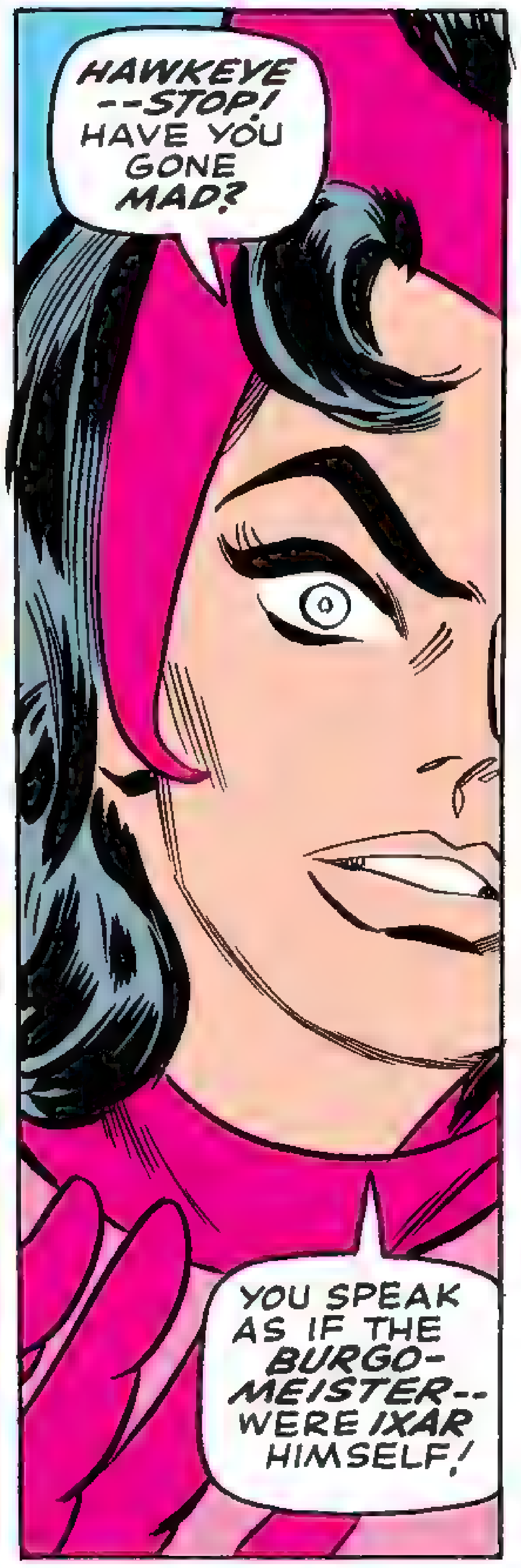

HOWEVER, THE FLEETING MOMENT THAT STEVE ROGERS THINKS OF THE ABSENT ARCHER PROVES A *FATEFUL* ONE, AS...
ZAK!
HAH! THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO LOWER YOUR GUARD WHEN FIGHTING *IXAR,* FOOL!
I MANAGED TO BLOCK *PART* OF THAT FORCE BOLT --BUT, TOO MUCH OF IT GOT *THRU!*
--*BLACKING OUT!* NOW, IT'S ALL UP TO--THE *OTHERS!*
UHHH--!
AND, EVEN AS CAP FALLS, *ONE* OF THOSE OTHERS IS ON THE *SCENE...*
FTAP!
THE *WASP* ATTACKS AGAIN! TOO MANY OF HER STINGS--MIGHT DAMAGE THE *ARMOR* OF WHICH MY BODY IS COMPOSED!
THEREFORE, I MUST DISPOSE OF HER *AT ONCE*--BY MEANS OF AN *ELECTRICAL CHARGE* OF MEDIUM VOLTAGE!
KLIK!
AND, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, JANET VAN DYNE HAS JUST COME TO A MOMENTARY REST ON THE GIANT'S *SHOULDER,* WHEN...
ZZZ
OOOH!--USED UP MY LAST *STING*--AND, COULDN'T GET AWAY FROM IXAR... IN *TIME*--!
NOW, TO SEARCH OUT THE ONE CALLED *HAWKEYE,* AND--
STOP, IXAR! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN... THE *SCARLET WITCH?*
NO, WITLESS FEMALE... I DID NOT *FORGET!* BUT, YOU ARE NO THREAT TO ME WITHOUT YOUR *HEX POWER!*
AND, I KNOW THAT IT TAKES MUCH *TIME* FOR YOU TO RESTORE IT AFTER *UTILIZING* IT FULLY!
PERHAPS... BUT, NOT AS LONG AS YOU *IMAGINE!* NOT AS LONG AS IT DID *FORMERLY!*
BESIDES, NOW I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT MY *TARGET* IS--THE DELICATE *MECHANISMS* WHICH OPERATE YOUR POWERHOUSE BODY!
THE GIRL IS *RIGHT!* EVEN AS SHE SPEAKS, THE TINY COMPONENT PARTS OF MY MAMMOTH FORM ARE GOING *OUT OF CONTROL!*
WHIRR!
THEY ARE *DESTROYING* THEMSELVES--*IMMOBILIZING* ME! CAN NO LONGER... DIRECT MY *MOVEMENTS*--! *FALLING*--!

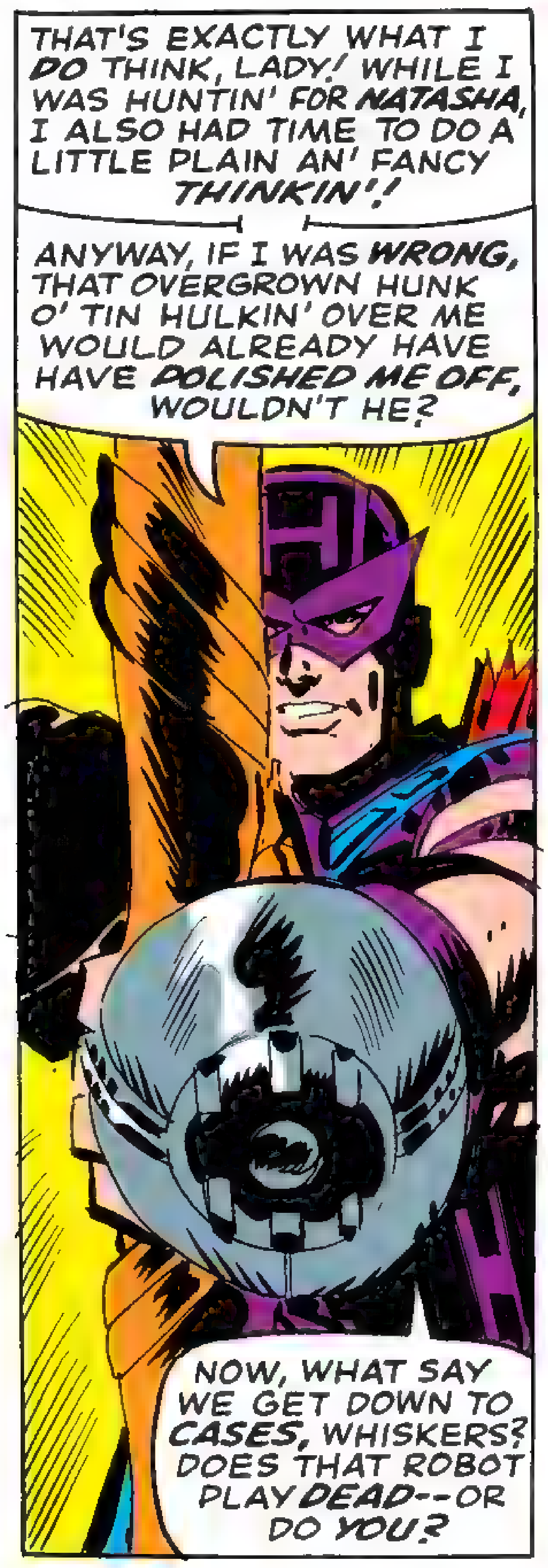

IT WORKED! I EXHAUSTED ALL MY ENERGY IN ONE LAST HEX--AND SHORT-CIRCUITED HIM!
PROBABLY HIS SELF-CONTAINED BRAIN IS STILL OPERATIVE--BUT UNABLE TO MOVE HIS DAMAGED BODY!
BUT--WHAT OF THE AVENGERS? WHAT OF... PIETRO?
THEN, ALL OTHER THOUGHTS BANISHED FROM HER MIND, THE SUPER-POWERED SORCERESS RUSHES TO HER FALLEN BROTHER'S SIDE...
PIETRO--! HE'S SO STILL! CAN IT BE THAT FATE RESTORED HIS POWER--ONLY TO DESTROY HIM--?
NO! IXAR'S BLAST MUST HAVE MERELY STUNNED HIM! HE MOVES--HE LIVES!
THEY ALL LIVE, FEMALE--BUT NOT FOR LONG!
IXAR! HE HAS ALREADY RECOVERED--BUT HOW?
HE'S LOWERING ONE OF THE CYLINDERS ON ME--AND, MY HEX POWER IS COMPLETELY SPENT FOR THE TIME BEING!
YOU WOULD TRY TO MEASURE IXAR AGAINST THE PUNY SCIENCE OF YOUR OWN PLANET, MORTAL..?
UNLIKE THE PRIMITIVE MECHANISMS OF EARTH, THE COMPONENTS OF MY METALLIC FORM ARE SELF-REPAIRING... AND TOOK BUT A FEW MOMENTS TO REBUILD THEMSELVES ANEW!
NOW, I SHALL PLACE ALL THE AVENGERS BACK IN THEIR TUBES--AND ABSORB THEIR POWERS FOR ONCE AND FOR ALL!
WE FEEL SLIGHTED, BRIGHT-EYES! YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT US!
WHAT? WHO--?
HAWKEYE--AND THE BLACK WIDOW!
YOU KNOW IT, LADY! AS LONG AS ONE AVENGER IS FREE, NO TWO-LEGGED SEWING-MACHINE IS DOIN' ANYTHING TO THE REST OF 'EM!
YOU DARE CHALLENGE ME--YOU, WHO ARE THE WEAKEST OF ALL?
YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO HURT A GUY, DON'TCHA?

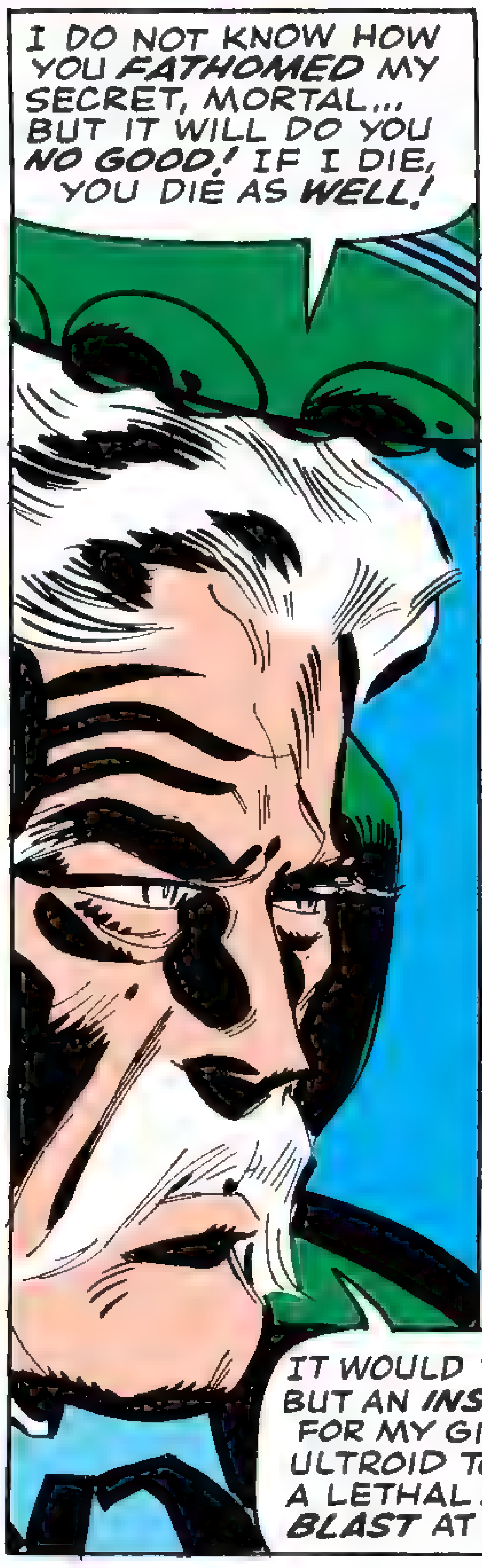

YOU HAVE COURAGE, EARTHLING! BUT, YOU WASTE IT IN A USELESS GESTURE!
I INTENDED TO SEEK YOU OUT LAST OF ALL--BUT, NOW I SHALL DISPOSE OF YOU AND THE FEMALE FIRST!
THEN, STOP YAKKIN' AND START DISPOSIN', MISTER!

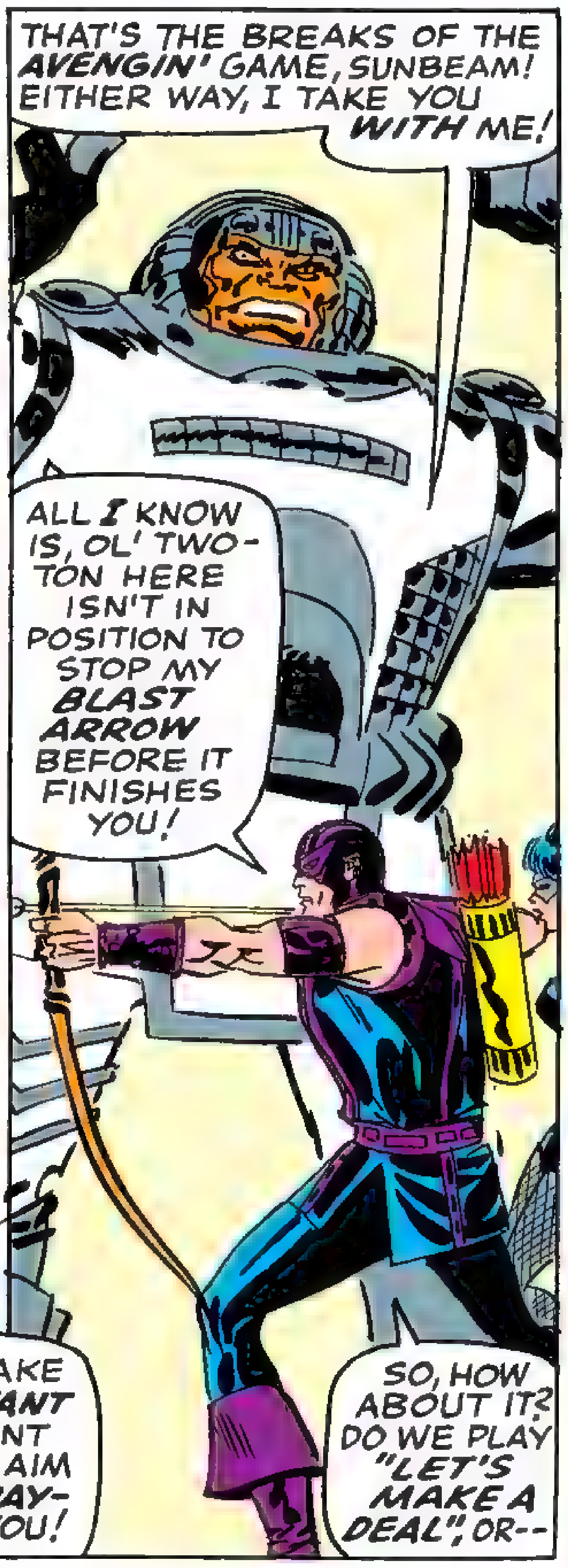

FOOL! DO YOU THINK THAT ONE OF YOUR FEEBLE SHAFTS WILL STOP ME AS IT DID ONE LONE ULTROID?
MAYBE NOT--IF I AIMED AT YOU...
FZAK!

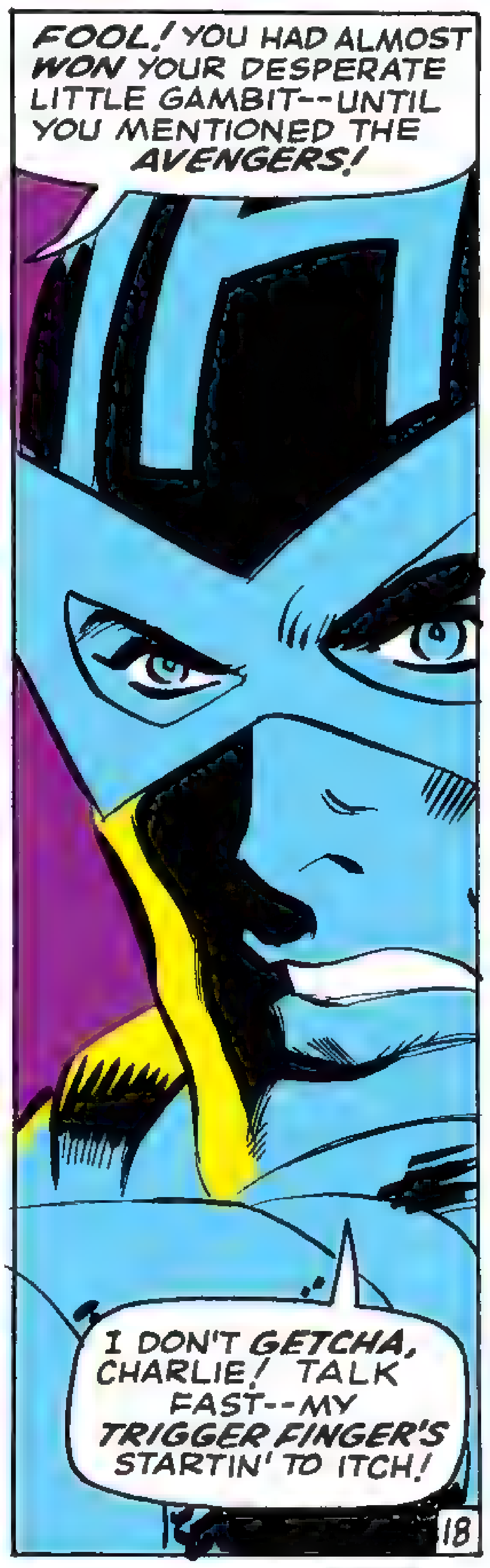

BUT, I GOT A BETTER PLACE TO AIM MY BLAST ARROWS, SUNBEAM--AND ONE OF 'EM IS RIGHT AT THE BURGO-MEISTER, HERE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?
WHY DO YOU AIM YOUR WEAPON AT ME? I AM BUT A CAPTIVE--LIKE YOUR FELLOW AVENGERS!
I THINK DIFFERENT, MISTER! AND, IF YOU DON'T CALL OFF THAT WALKIN' PIN-BALL MACHINE BY THE TIME I COUNT THREE, WE'LL FIND OUT WHO'S RIGHT!

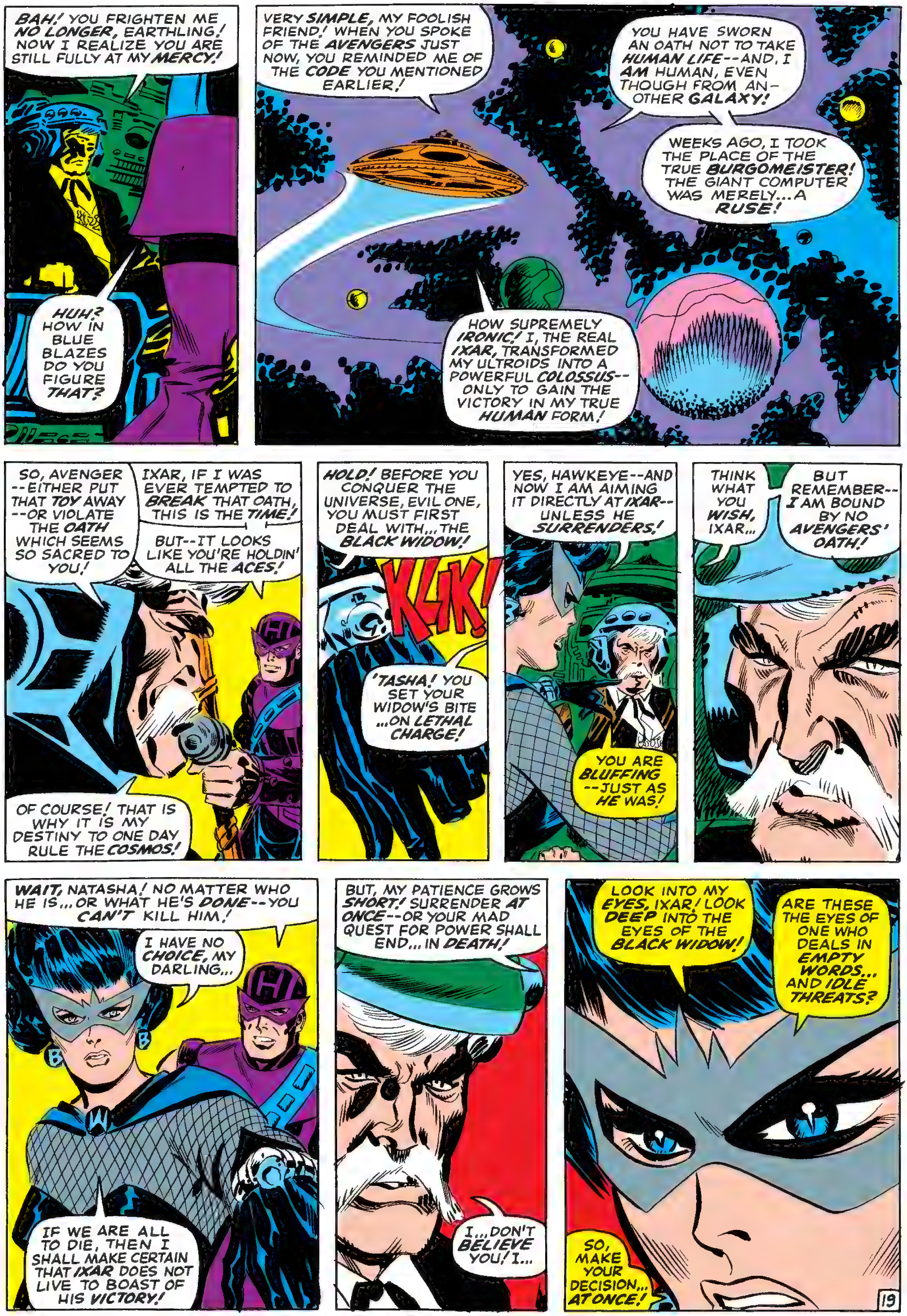

HAWKEYE--STOP! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
YOU SPEAK AS IF THE BURGO-MEISTER--WERE IXAR HIMSELF!

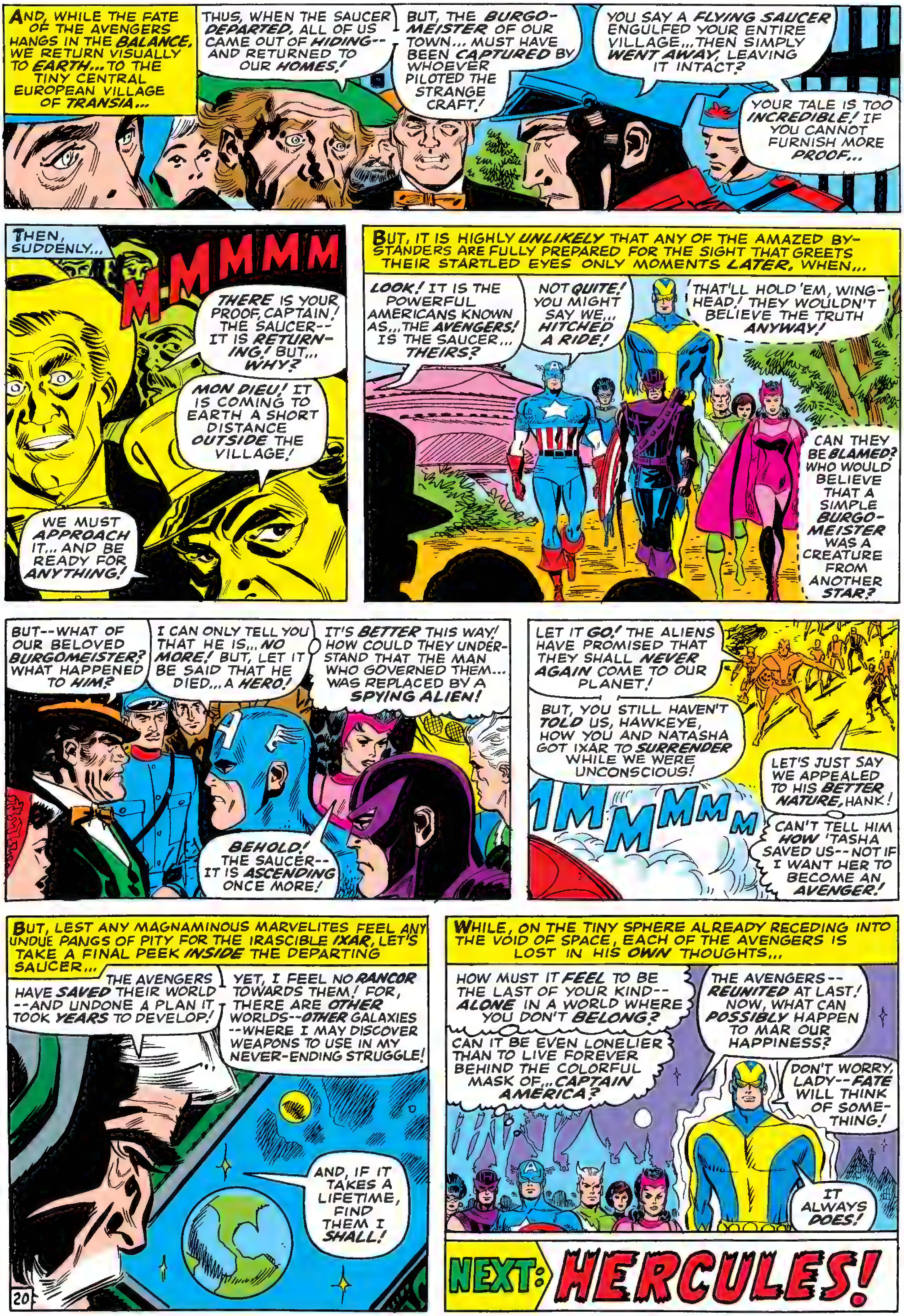

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I DO THINK, LADY! WHILE I WAS HUNTIN' FOR NATASHA, I ALSO HAD TIME TO DO A LITTLE PLAIN AN' FANCY THINKIN'!
ANYWAY, IF I WAS WRONG, THAT OVERGROWN HUNK O' TIN HULKIN' OVER ME WOULD ALREADY HAVE HAVE POLISHED ME OFF, WOULDN'T HE?
NOW, WHAT SAY WE GET DOWN TO CASES, WHISKERS? DOES THAT ROBOT PLAY DEAD--OR DO YOU?


I DO NOT KNOW HOW YOU FATHOMED MY SECRET, MORTAL... BUT IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD! IF I DIE, YOU DIE AS WELL!
IT WOULD TAKE BUT AN INSTANT FOR MY GIANT ULTROID TO AIM A LETHAL RAY-BLAST AT YOU!

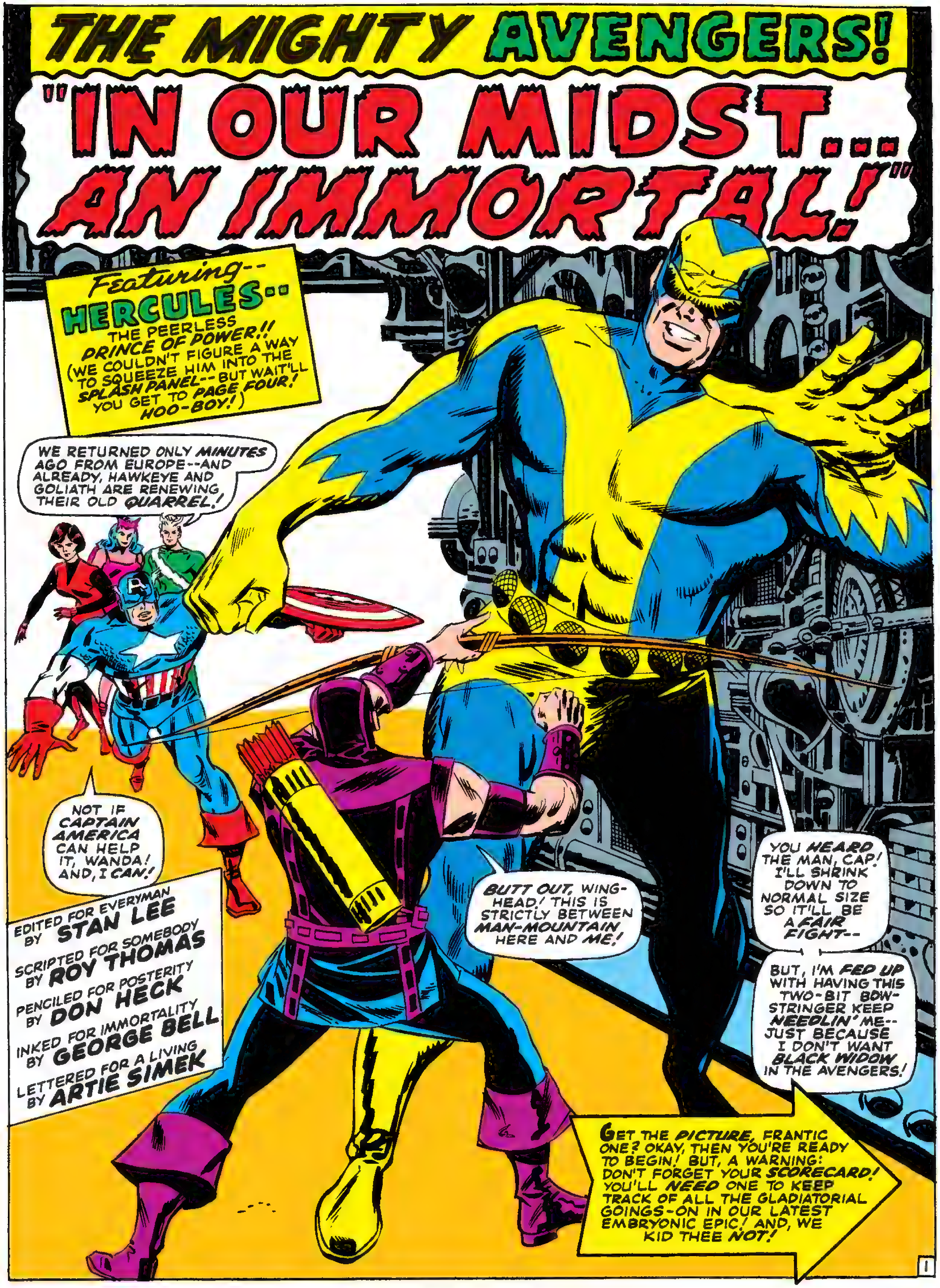

THAT'S THE BREAKS OF THE AVENGIN' GAME, SUNBEAM! EITHER WAY, I TAKE YOU WITH ME!
ALL I KNOW IS, OL' TWO-TON HERE ISN'T IN POSITION TO STOP MY BLAST ARROW BEFORE IT FINISHES YOU!
SO, HOW ABOUT IT? DO WE PLAY "LET'S MAKE A DEAL", OR--


FOOL! YOU HAD ALMOST WON YOUR DESPERATE LITTLE GAMBIT--UNTIL YOU MENTIONED THE AVENGERS!
I DON'T GETCHA, CHARLIE! TALK FAST--MY TRIGGER FINGER'S STARTIN' TO ITCH!


BAH! YOU FRIGHTEN ME NO LONGER, EARTHLING! NOW I REALIZE YOU ARE STILL FULLY AT MY MERCY!
HUH? HOW IN BLUE BLAZES DO YOU FIGURE THAT?
VERY SIMPLE, MY FOOLISH FRIEND! WHEN YOU SPOKE OF THE AVENGERS JUST NOW, YOU REMINDED ME OF THE CODE YOU MENTIONED EARLIER!
YOU HAVE SWORN AN OATH NOT TO TAKE HUMAN LIFE--AND, I AM HUMAN, EVEN THOUGH FROM ANOTHER GALAXY!
WEEKS AGO, I TOOK THE PLACE OF THE TRUE BURGOMEISTER! THE GIANT COMPUTER WAS MERELY...A RUSE!
HOW SUPREMELY IRONIC! I, THE REAL IXAR, TRANSFORMED MY ULTROIDS INTO A POWERFUL COLOSSUS--ONLY TO GAIN THE VICTORY IN MY TRUE HUMAN FORM!
SO, AVENGER--EITHER PUT THAT TOY AWAY--OR VIOLATE THE OATH WHICH SEEMS SO SACRED TO YOU!
IXAR, IF I WAS EVER TEMPTED TO BREAK THAT OATH, THIS IS THE TIME!
BUT--IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HOLDIN' ALL THE ACES!
OF COURSE! THAT IS WHY IT IS MY DESTINY TO ONE DAY RULE THE COSMOS!
HOLD! BEFORE YOU CONQUER THE UNIVERSE, EVIL ONE, YOU MUST FIRST DEAL WITH... THE BLACK WIDOW!
KLIK!
'TASHA! YOU SET YOUR WIDOW'S BITE ...ON LETHAL CHARGE!
YES, HAWKEYE--AND NOW I AM AIMING IT DIRECTLY AT IXAR--UNLESS HE SURRENDERS!
YOU ARE BLUFFING--JUST AS HE WAS!
THINK WHAT YOU WISH, IXAR...
BUT REMEMBER--I AM BOUND BY NO AVENGERS' OATH!
WAIT, NATASHA! NO MATTER WHO HE IS... OR WHAT HE'S DONE--YOU CAN'T KILL HIM!
I HAVE NO CHOICE, MY DARLING...
IF WE ARE ALL TO DIE, THEN I SHALL MAKE CERTAIN THAT IXAR DOES NOT LIVE TO BOAST OF HIS VICTORY!
BUT, MY PATIENCE GROWS SHORT! SURRENDER AT ONCE--OR YOUR MAD QUEST FOR POWER SHALL END... IN DEATH!
I...DON'T BELIEVE YOU! I...
LOOK INTO MY EYES, IXAR! LOOK DEEP INTO THE EYES OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
ARE THESE THE EYES OF ONE WHO DEALS IN EMPTY WORDS... AND IDLE THREATS?
SO, MAKE YOUR DECISION... AT ONCE!


AND, WHILE THE FATE OF THE AVENGERS HANGS IN THE BALANCE, WE RETURN VISUALLY TO EARTH... TO THE TINY CENTRAL EUROPEAN VILLAGE OF TRANSIA...
THUS, WHEN THE SAUCER DEPARTED, ALL OF US CAME OUT OF HIDING-- AND RETURNED TO OUR HOMES!
BUT, THE BURGOMEISTER OF OUR TOWN... MUST HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY WHOEVER PILOTED THE STRANGE CRAFT!
YOU SAY A FLYING SAUCER ENGULFED YOUR ENTIRE VILLAGE... THEN SIMPLY WENT AWAY, LEAVING IT INTACT?
YOUR TALE IS TOO INCREDIBLE! IF YOU CANNOT FURNISH MORE PROOF...
THEN, SUDDENLY...
MMMMMM
THERE IS YOUR PROOF, CAPTAIN! THE SAUCER-- IT IS RETURNING! BUT... WHY?
MON DIEU! IT IS COMING TO EARTH A SHORT DISTANCE OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE!
WE MUST APPROACH IT... AND BE READY FOR ANYTHING!
BUT, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF THE AMAZED BYSTANDERS ARE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE SIGHT THAT GREETS THEIR STARTLED EYES ONLY MOMENTS LATER, WHEN...
LOOK! IT IS THE POWERFUL AMERICANS KNOWN AS... THE AVENGERS! IS THE SAUCER... THEIRS?
NOT QUITE! YOU MIGHT SAY WE... HITCHED A RIDE!
THAT'LL HOLD 'EM, WING-HEAD! THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE TRUTH ANYWAY!
CAN THEY BE BLAMED? WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT A SIMPLE BURGOMEISTER WAS A CREATURE FROM ANOTHER STAR?
BUT--WHAT OF OUR BELOVED BURGOMEISTER? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
I CAN ONLY TELL YOU THAT HE IS... NO MORE! BUT, LET IT BE SAID THAT HE DIED... A HERO!
IT'S BETTER THIS WAY! HOW COULD THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THE MAN WHO GOVERNED THEM... WAS REPLACED BY A SPYING ALIEN!
BEHOLD! THE SAUCER-- IT IS ASCENDING ONCE MORE!
LET IT GO! THE ALIENS HAVE PROMISED THAT THEY SHALL NEVER AGAIN COME TO OUR PLANET!
BUT, YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD US, HAWKEYE, HOW YOU AND NATASHA GOT IXAR TO SURRENDER WHILE WE WERE UNCONSCIOUS!
LET'S JUST SAY WE APPEALED TO HIS BETTER NATURE, HANK!
MMMMMMM
CAN'T TELL HIM HOW 'TASHA SAVED US-- NOT IF I WANT HER TO BECOME AN AVENGER!
BUT, LEST ANY MAGNANIMOUS MARVELITES FEEL ANY UNDUE PANGS OF PITY FOR THE IRASCIBLE IXAR, LET'S TAKE A FINAL PEEK INSIDE THE DEPARTING SAUCER...
THE AVENGERS HAVE SAVED THEIR WORLD --AND UNDONE A PLAN IT TOOK YEARS TO DEVELOP!
YET, I FEEL NO RANCOR TOWARDS THEM! FOR, THERE ARE OTHER WORLDS--OTHER GALAXIES --WHERE I MAY DISCOVER WEAPONS TO USE IN MY NEVER-ENDING STRUGGLE!
AND, IF IT TAKES A LIFETIME, FIND THEM I SHALL!
WHILE, ON THE TINY SPHERE ALREADY RECEDING INTO THE VOID OF SPACE, EACH OF THE AVENGERS IS LOST IN HIS OWN THOUGHTS...
HOW MUST IT FEEL TO BE THE LAST OF YOUR KIND-- ALONE IN A WORLD WHERE YOU DON'T BELONG?
CAN IT BE EVEN LONELIER THAN TO LIVE FOREVER BEHIND THE COLORFUL MASK OF... CAPTAIN AMERICA?
THE AVENGERS-- REUNITED AT LAST! NOW, WHAT CAN POSSIBLY HAPPEN TO MAR OUR HAPPINESS?
DON'T WORRY, LADY-- FATE WILL THINK OF SOMETHING!
IT ALWAYS DOES!
NEXT: HERCULES!

AVENGERS #38 (MARCH 1967)


THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"IN OUR MIDST... AN IMMORTAL!"
Featuring-- HERCULES.. THE PEERLESS PRINCE OF POWER!! (WE COULDN'T FIGURE A WAY TO SQUEEZE HIM INTO THE SPLASH PANEL-- BUT WAIT'LL YOU GET TO PAGE FOUR! HOO-BOY!)
WE RETURNED ONLY MINUTES AGO FROM EUROPE--AND ALREADY, HAWKEYE AND GOLIATH ARE RENEWING THEIR OLD QUARREL!
NOT IF CAPTAIN AMERICA CAN HELP IT, WANDA! AND, I CAN!
BUTT OUT, WING-HEAD! THIS IS STRICTLY BETWEEN MAN-MOUNTAIN HERE AND ME!
YOU HEARD THE MAN, CAP! I'LL SHRINK DOWN TO NORMAL SIZE SO IT'LL BE A FAIR FIGHT--
BUT, I'M FED UP WITH HAVING THIS TWO-BIT BOW-STRINGER KEEP NEEDLIN' ME-- JUST BECAUSE I DON'T WANT BLACK WIDOW IN THE AVENGERS!
EDITED FOR EVERYMAN BY STAN LEE
SCRIPTED FOR SOMEBODY BY ROY THOMAS
PENCILED FOR POSTERITY BY DON HECK
INKED FOR IMMORTALITY BY GEORGE BELL
LETTERED FOR A LIVING BY ARTIE SIMEK
GET THE PICTURE, FRANTIC ONE? OKAY, THEN YOU'RE READY TO BEGIN! BUT, A WARNING: DON'T FORGET YOUR SCORECARD! YOU'LL NEED ONE TO KEEP TRACK OF ALL THE GLADIATORIAL GOINGS-ON IN OUR LATEST EMBRYONIC EPIC! AND, WE KID THEE NOT!
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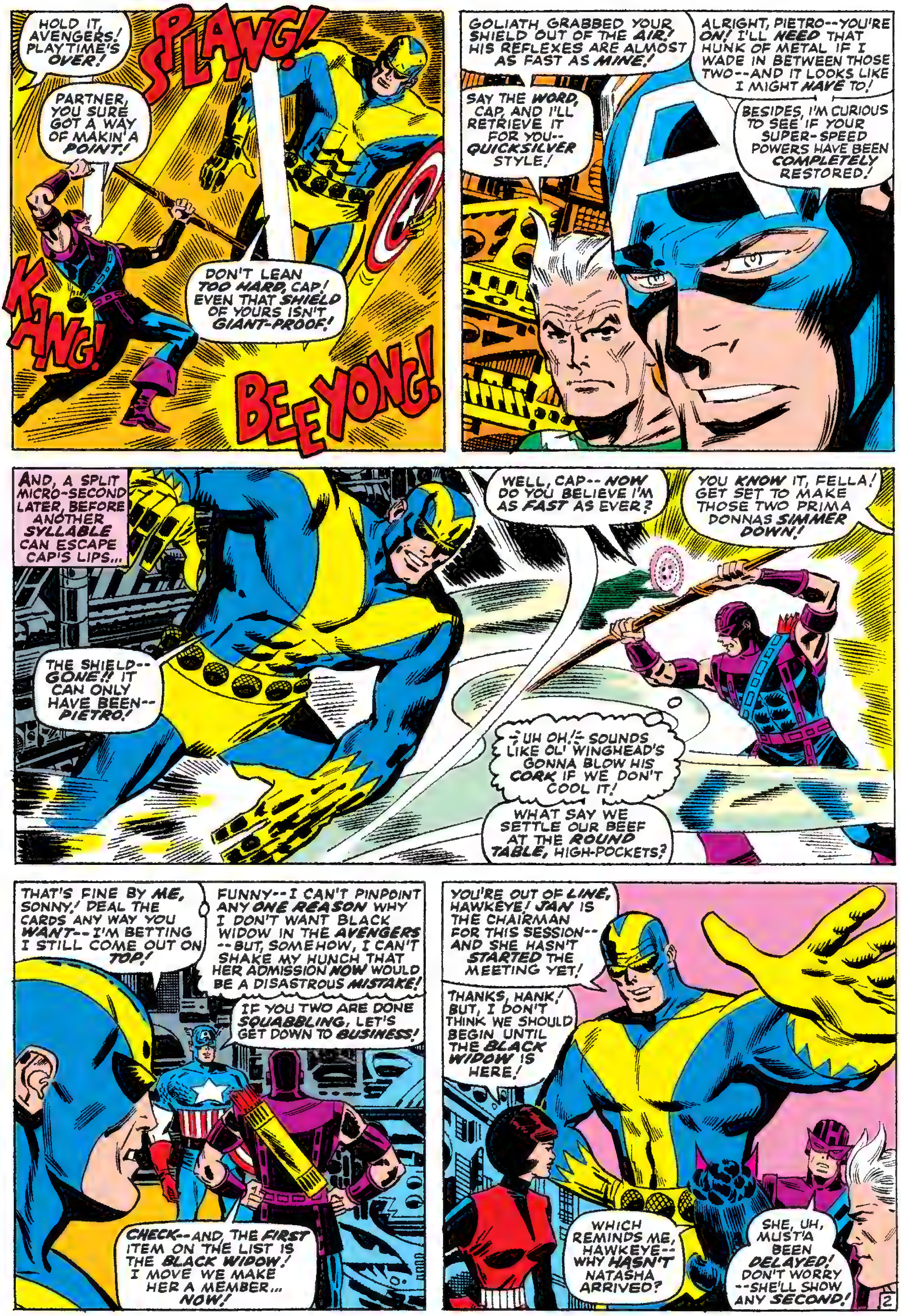
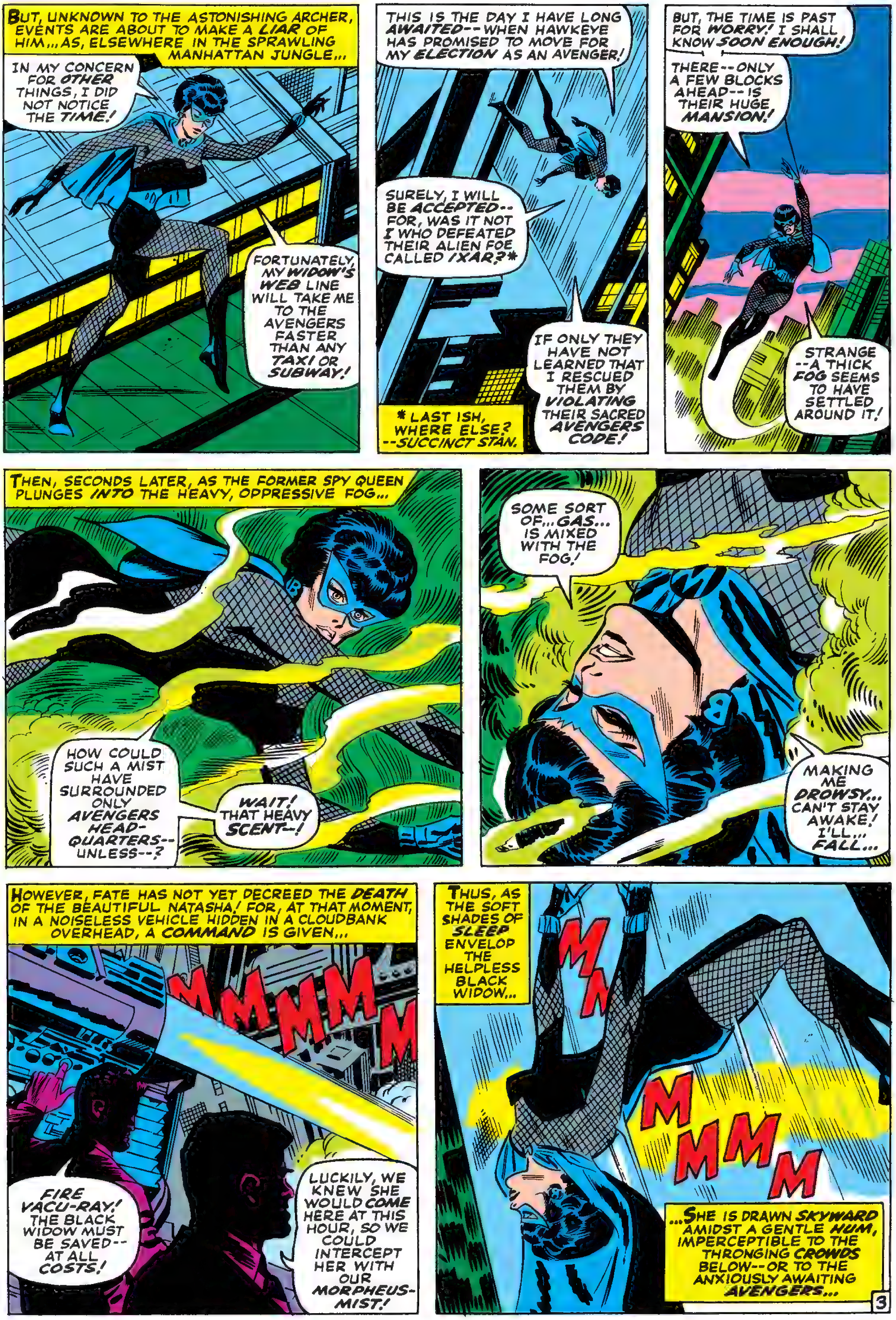
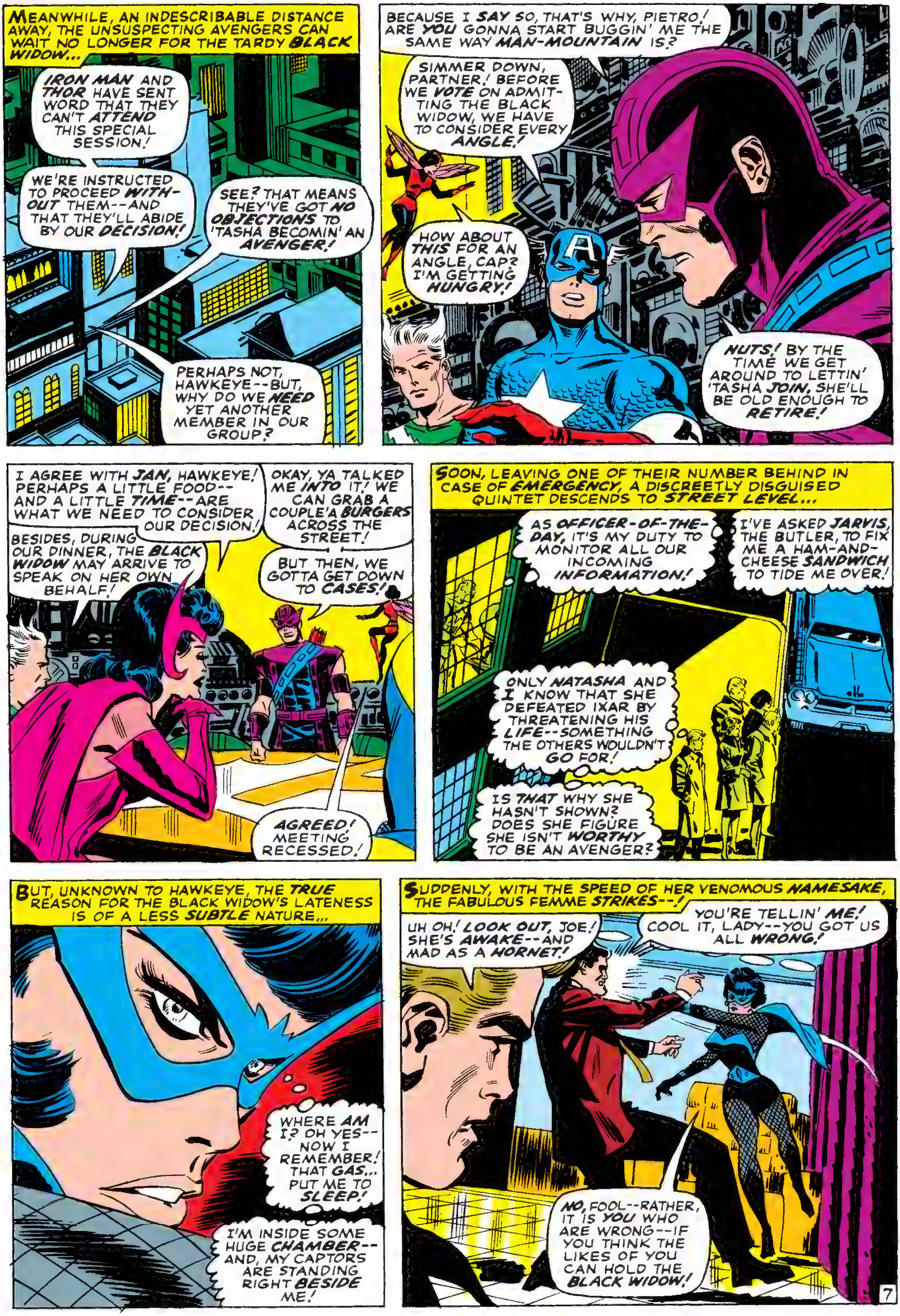
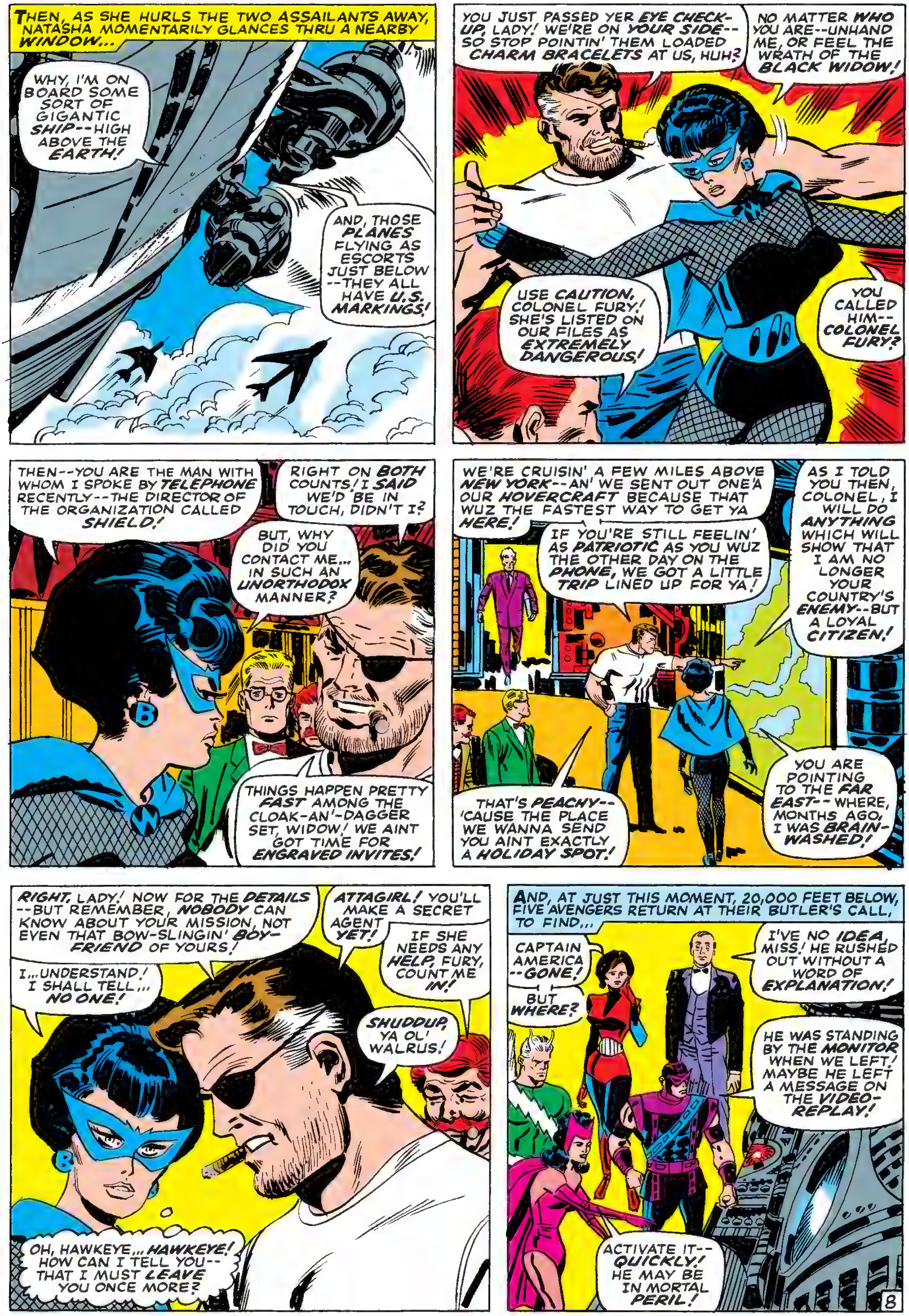
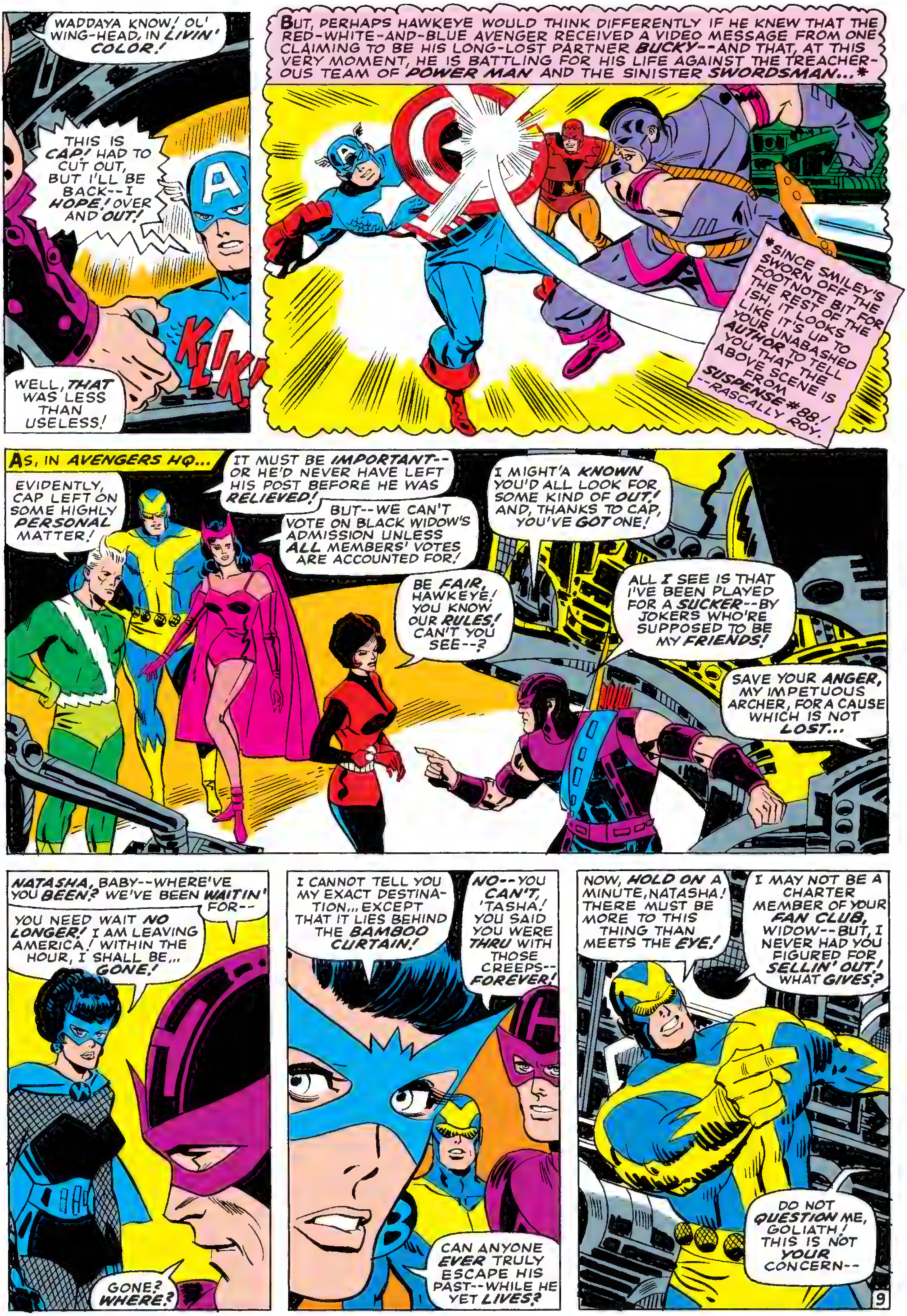
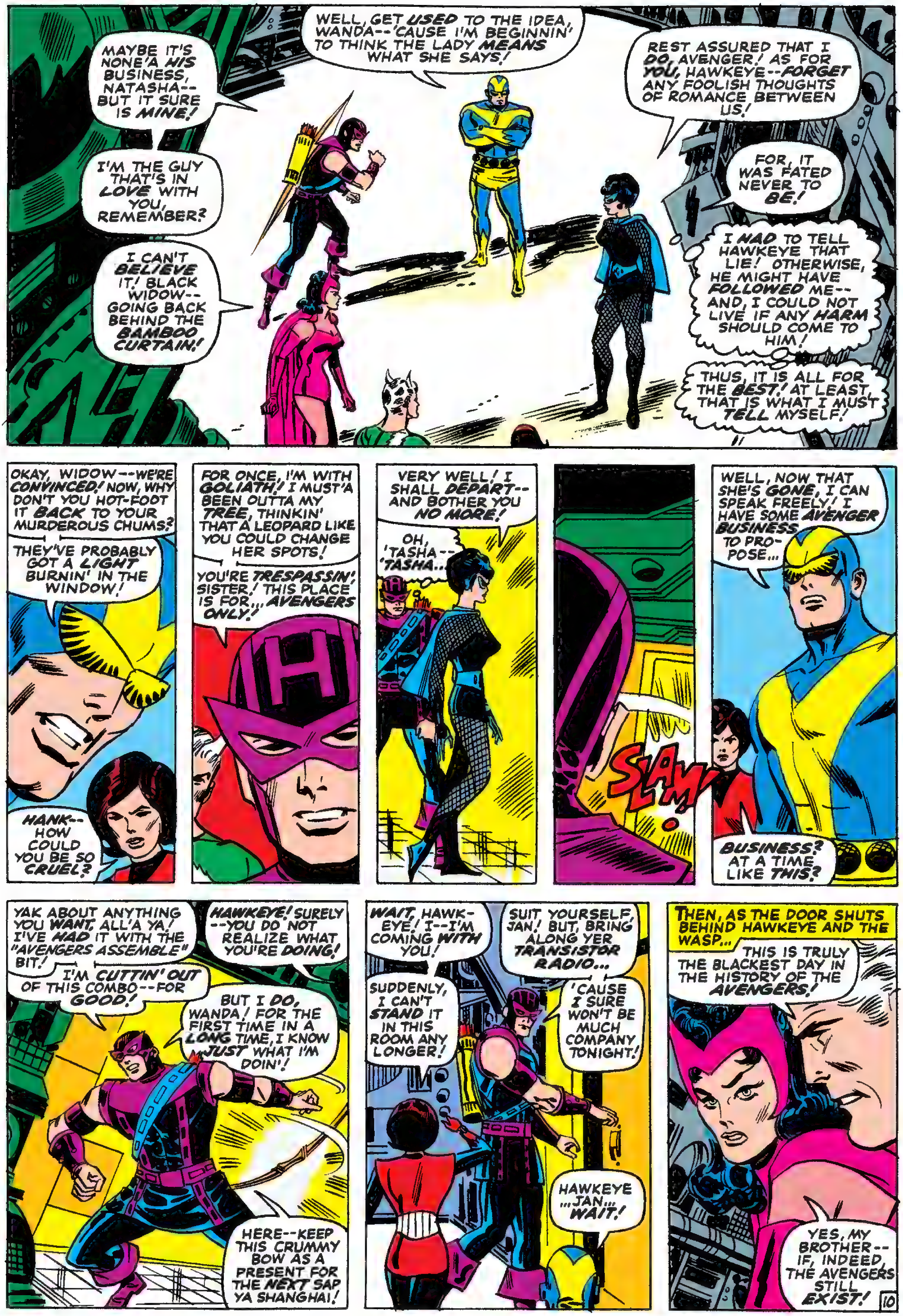

HOLD IT, AVENGERS! PLAYTIME'S OVER!
SPLANG!
PARTNER, YOU SURE GOT A WAY OF MAKIN' A POINT!
KRANG!
DON'T LEAN TOO HARD, CAP! EVEN THAT SHIELD OF YOURS ISN'T GIANT-PROOF!
BEEYONG!
GOLIATH GRABBED YOUR SHIELD OUT OF THE AIR! HIS REFLEXES ARE ALMOST AS FAST AS MINE!
SAY THE WORD, CAP, AND I'LL RETRIEVE IT FOR YOU-- QUICKSILVER STYLE!
ALRIGHT, PIETRO--YOU'RE ON! I'LL NEED THAT HUNK OF METAL IF I WADE IN BETWEEN THOSE TWO--AND IT LOOKS LIKE I MIGHT HAVE TO!
BESIDES, I'M CURIOUS TO SEE IF YOUR SUPER-SPEED POWERS HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY RESTORED!
AND, A SPLIT MICRO-SECOND LATER, BEFORE ANOTHER SYLLABLE CAN ESCAPE CAP'S LIPS...
THE SHIELD-- GONE!! IT CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN-- PIETRO!
WELL, CAP-- NOW DO YOU BELIEVE I'M AS FAST AS EVER?
YOU KNOW IT, FELLA! GET SET TO MAKE THOSE TWO PRIMA DONNAS SIMMER DOWN!
UH OH! SOUNDS LIKE OL' WINGHEAD'S GONNA BLOW HIS CORK IF WE DON'T COOL IT!
WHAT SAY WE SETTLE OUR BEEF AT THE ROUND TABLE, HIGH-POCKETS?
THAT'S FINE BY ME, SONNY! DEAL THE CARDS ANY WAY YOU WANT-- I'M BETTING I STILL COME OUT ON TOP!
FUNNY--I CAN'T PINPOINT ANY ONE REASON WHY I DON'T WANT BLACK WIDOW IN THE AVENGERS --BUT, SOMEHOW, I CAN'T SHAKE MY HUNCH THAT HER ADMISSION NOW WOULD BE A DISASTROUS MISTAKE!
IF YOU TWO ARE DONE SQUABBLING, LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!
CHECK--AND THE FIRST ITEM ON THE LIST IS THE BLACK WIDOW! I MOVE WE MAKE HER A MEMBER... NOW!
YOU'RE OUT OF LINE, HAWKEYE! JAN IS THE CHAIRMAN FOR THIS SESSION-- AND SHE HASN'T STARTED THE MEETING YET!
THANKS, HANK! BUT, I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BEGIN UNTIL THE BLACK WIDOW IS HERE!
WHICH REMINDS ME, HAWKEYE-- WHY HASN'T NATASHA ARRIVED?
SHE, UH, MUST'A BEEN DELAYED! DON'T WORRY --SHE'LL SHOW ANY SECOND!
2


BUT, UNKNOWN TO THE ASTONISHING ARCHER, EVENTS ARE ABOUT TO MAKE A *LIAR* OF HIM... AS, ELSEWHERE IN THE SPRAWLING MANHATTAN JUNGLE...
IN MY CONCERN FOR *OTHER* THINGS, I DID NOT NOTICE THE *TIME!*
FORTUNATELY, MY *WIDOW'S WEB* LINE WILL TAKE ME TO THE AVENGERS FASTER THAN ANY *TAXI* OR *SUBWAY!*
THIS IS THE DAY I HAVE LONG *AWAITED*-- WHEN HAWKEYE HAS PROMISED TO MOVE FOR MY *ELECTION* AS AN AVENGER!
SURELY, I WILL BE *ACCEPTED*-- FOR, WAS IT NOT *I* WHO DEFEATED THEIR ALIEN FOE CALLED *IXAR?**
IF ONLY THEY HAVE NOT LEARNED THAT I RESCUED THEM BY *VIOLATING* THEIR SACRED *AVENGERS CODE!*
* LAST ISH, WHERE ELSE? --*SUCCINCT STAN.*
BUT, THE TIME IS PAST FOR *WORRY!* I SHALL KNOW *SOON ENOUGH!*
THERE-- ONLY A FEW BLOCKS AHEAD-- IS THEIR HUGE *MANSION!*
STRANGE --A THICK *FOG* SEEMS TO HAVE SETTLED AROUND IT!
THEN, SECONDS LATER, AS THE FORMER SPY QUEEN PLUNGES *INTO* THE HEAVY, OPPRESSIVE FOG...
HOW COULD SUCH A MIST HAVE SURROUNDED ONLY *AVENGERS HEAD-QUARTERS*-- UNLESS--?
WAIT! THAT HEAVY *SCENT*--!
SOME SORT OF... *GAS*... IS MIXED WITH THE FOG!
MAKING ME *DROWSY*... CAN'T STAY AWAKE! I'LL... *FALL*...
HOWEVER, FATE HAS NOT YET DECREED THE *DEATH* OF THE BEAUTIFUL NATASHA! FOR, AT THAT MOMENT, IN A NOISELESS VEHICLE HIDDEN IN A CLOUDBANK OVERHEAD, A *COMMAND* IS GIVEN...
MMMMMM
FIRE VACU-RAY! THE BLACK WIDOW MUST BE SAVED-- AT ALL *COSTS!*
LUCKILY, WE KNEW SHE WOULD *COME* HERE AT THIS HOUR, SO WE COULD INTERCEPT HER WITH OUR *MORPHEUS-MIST!*
THUS, AS THE SOFT SHADES OF *SLEEP* ENVELOP THE HELPLESS BLACK WIDOW...
MM
MMMMM
...SHE IS DRAWN *SKYWARD* AMIDST A GENTLE *HUM*, IMPERCEPTIBLE TO THE THRONGING *CROWDS* BELOW-- OR TO THE ANXIOUSLY AWAITING *AVENGERS*...

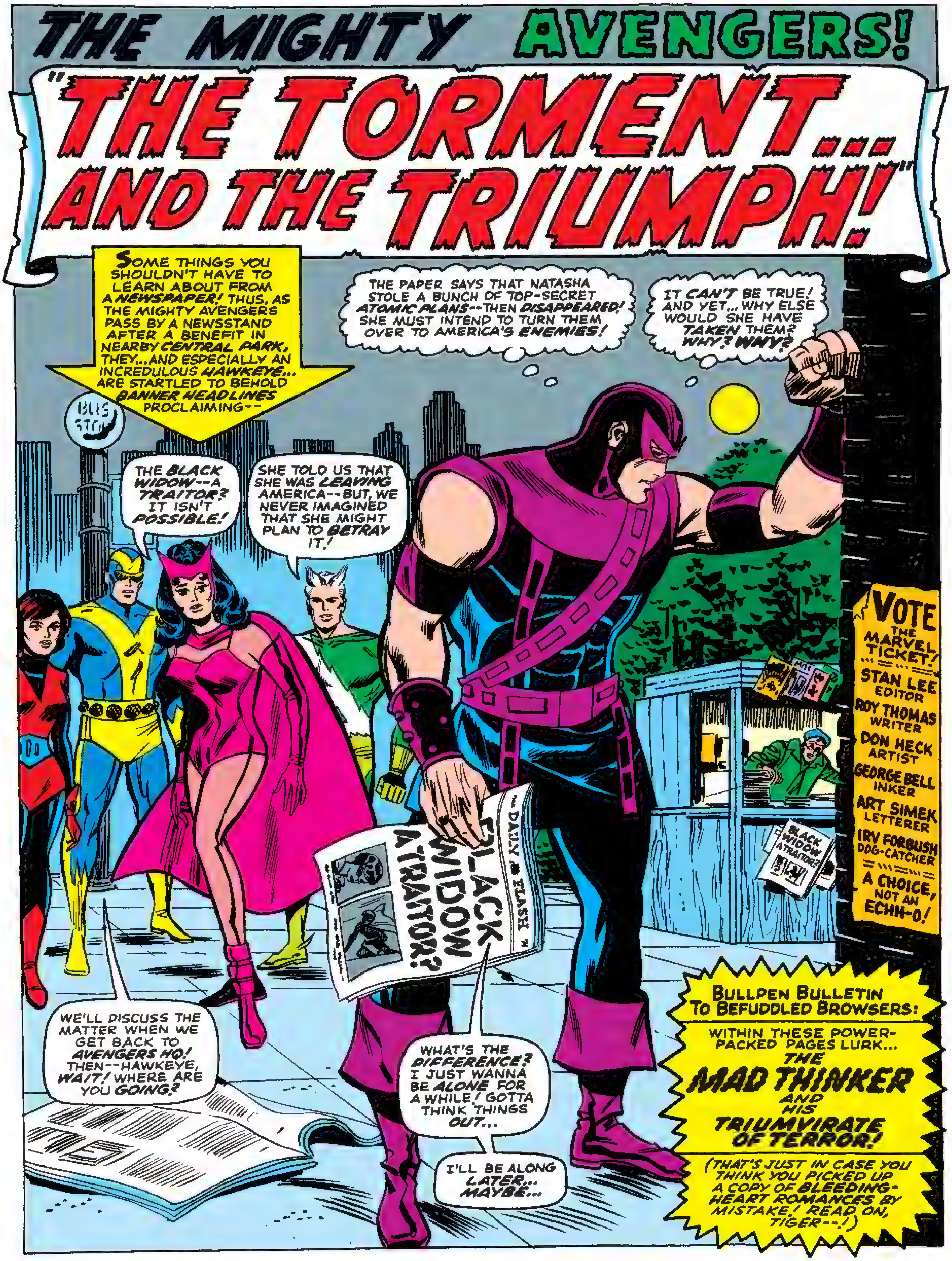

MEANWHILE, AN INDESCRIBABLE DISTANCE AWAY, THE UNSUSPECTING AVENGERS CAN WAIT NO LONGER FOR THE TARDY BLACK WIDOW...
IRON MAN AND THOR HAVE SENT WORD THAT THEY CAN'T ATTEND THIS SPECIAL SESSION!
WE'RE INSTRUCTED TO PROCEED WITHOUT THEM--AND THAT THEY'LL ABIDE BY OUR DECISION!
SEE? THAT MEANS THEY'VE GOT NO OBJECTIONS TO 'TASHA BECOMIN' AN AVENGER!
PERHAPS NOT, HAWKEYE--BUT, WHY DO WE NEED YET ANOTHER MEMBER IN OUR GROUP?
BECAUSE I SAY SO, THAT'S WHY, PIETRO! ARE YOU GONNA START BUGGIN' ME THE SAME WAY MAN-MOUNTAIN IS?
SIMMER DOWN, PARTNER! BEFORE WE VOTE ON ADMITTING THE BLACK WIDOW, WE HAVE TO CONSIDER EVERY ANGLE!
HOW ABOUT THIS FOR AN ANGLE, CAP? I'M GETTING HUNGRY!
NUTS! BY THE TIME WE GET AROUND TO LETTIN' 'TASHA JOIN, SHE'LL BE OLD ENOUGH TO RETIRE!
I AGREE WITH JAN, HAWKEYE! PERHAPS A LITTLE FOOD--AND A LITTLE TIME--ARE WHAT WE NEED TO CONSIDER OUR DECISION!
BESIDES, DURING OUR DINNER, THE BLACK WIDOW MAY ARRIVE TO SPEAK ON HER OWN BEHALF!
OKAY, YA TALKED ME INTO IT! WE CAN GRAB A COUPLE'A BURGERS ACROSS THE STREET!
BUT THEN, WE GOTTA GET DOWN TO CASES!
AGREED! MEETING RECESSED!
SOON, LEAVING ONE OF THEIR NUMBER BEHIND IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, A DISCREETLY DISGUISED QUINTET DESCENDS TO STREET LEVEL...
AS OFFICER-OF-THE-DAY, IT'S MY DUTY TO MONITOR ALL OUR INCOMING INFORMATION!
I'VE ASKED JARVIS, THE BUTLER, TO FIX ME A HAM-AND-CHEESE SANDWICH TO TIDE ME OVER!
ONLY NATASHA AND I KNOW THAT SHE DEFEATED IXAR BY THREATENING HIS LIFE--SOMETHING THE OTHERS WOULDN'T GO FOR!
IS THAT WHY SHE HASN'T SHOWN? DOES SHE FIGURE SHE ISN'T WORTHY TO BE AN AVENGER?
BUT, UNKNOWN TO HAWKEYE, THE TRUE REASON FOR THE BLACK WIDOW'S LATENESS IS OF A LESS SUBTLE NATURE...
WHERE AM I? OH YES--NOW I REMEMBER! THAT GAS... PUT ME TO SLEEP!
I'M INSIDE SOME HUGE CHAMBER--AND, MY CAPTORS ARE STANDING RIGHT BESIDE ME!
SUDDENLY, WITH THE SPEED OF HER VENOMOUS NAMESAKE, THE FABULOUS FEMME STRIKES--!
UH OH! LOOK OUT, JOE! SHE'S AWAKE--AND MAD AS A HORNET!
YOU'RE TELLIN' ME! COOL IT, LADY--YOU GOT US ALL WRONG!
NO, FOOL--RATHER, IT IS YOU WHO ARE WRONG--IF YOU THINK THE LIKES OF YOU CAN HOLD THE BLACK WIDOW!
7

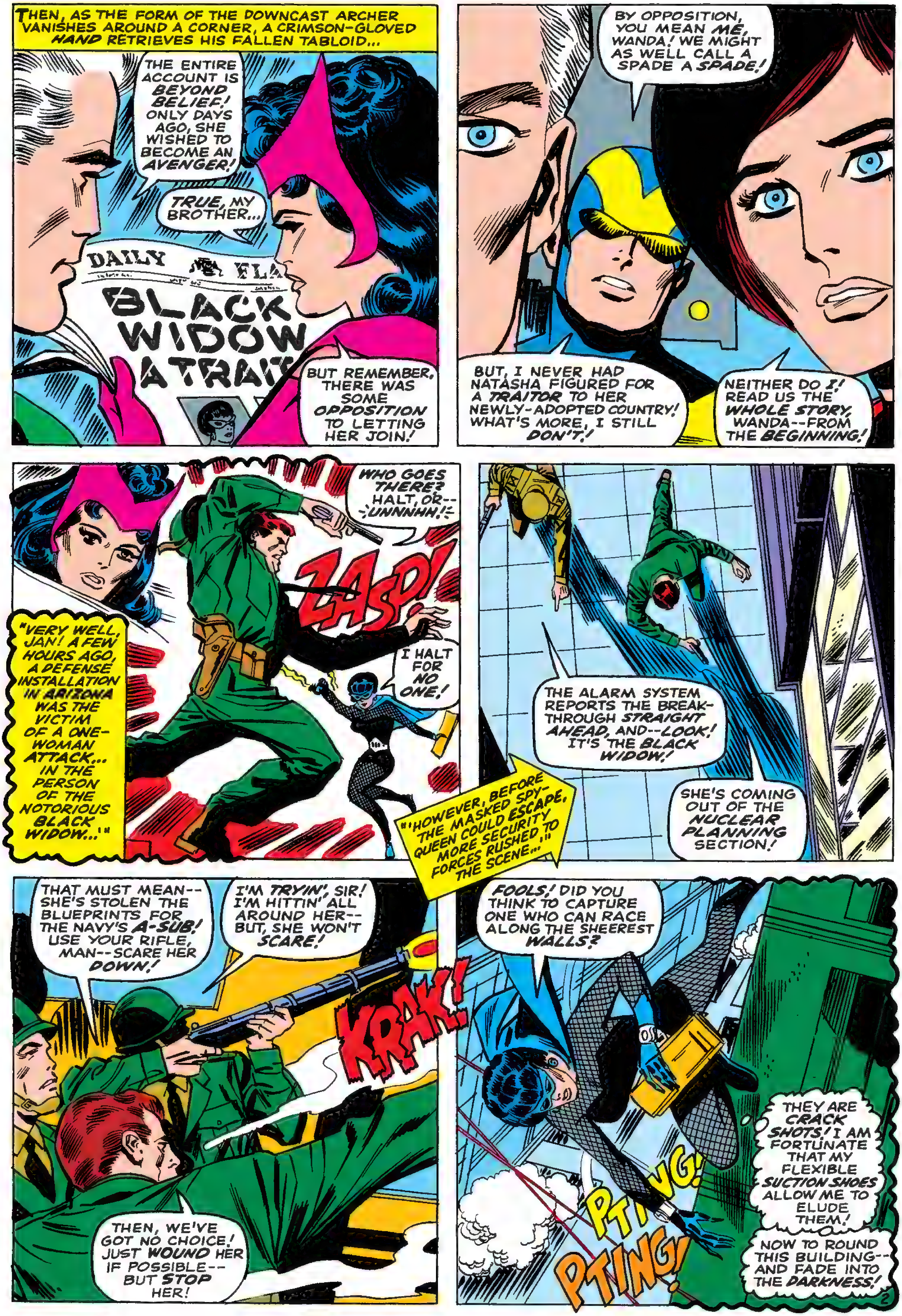

THEN, AS SHE HURLS THE TWO ASSAILANTS AWAY, NATASHA MOMENTARILY GLANCES THRU A NEARBY WINDOW...
WHY, I'M ON BOARD SOME SORT OF GIGANTIC SHIP--HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH!
AND, THOSE PLANES FLYING AS ESCORTS JUST BELOW--THEY ALL HAVE U.S. MARKINGS!
YOU JUST PASSED YER EYE CHECK-UP, LADY! WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE--SO STOP POINTIN' THEM LOADED CHARM BRACELETS AT US, HUH?
NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE--UNHAND ME, OR FEEL THE WRATH OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
USE CAUTION, COLONEL FURY! SHE'S LISTED ON OUR FILES AS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!
YOU CALLED HIM--COLONEL FURY?
THEN--YOU ARE THE MAN WITH WHOM I SPOKE BY TELEPHONE RECENTLY--THE DIRECTOR OF THE ORGANIZATION CALLED SHIELD!
RIGHT ON BOTH COUNTS! I SAID WE'D BE IN TOUCH, DIDN'T I?
BUT, WHY DID YOU CONTACT ME... IN SUCH AN UNORTHODOX MANNER?
THINGS HAPPEN PRETTY FAST AMONG THE CLOAK-AN'-DAGGER SET, WIDOW! WE AINT GOT TIME FOR ENGRAVED INVITES!
WE'RE CRUISIN' A FEW MILES ABOVE NEW YORK--AN' WE SENT OUT ONE'A OUR HOVERCRAFT BECAUSE THAT WUZ THE FASTEST WAY TO GET YA HERE!
IF YOU'RE STILL FEELIN' AS PATRIOTIC AS YOU WUZ THE OTHER DAY ON THE PHONE, WE GOT A LITTLE TRIP LINED UP FOR YA!
AS I TOLD YOU THEN, COLONEL, I WILL DO ANYTHING WHICH WILL SHOW THAT I AM NO LONGER YOUR COUNTRY'S ENEMY--BUT A LOYAL CITIZEN!
THAT'S PEACHY--'CAUSE THE PLACE WE WANNA SEND YOU AINT EXACTLY A HOLIDAY SPOT!
YOU ARE POINTING TO THE FAR EAST--WHERE, MONTHS AGO, I WAS BRAIN-WASHED!
RIGHT, LADY! NOW FOR THE DETAILS--BUT REMEMBER, NOBODY CAN KNOW ABOUT YOUR MISSION, NOT EVEN THAT BOW-SLINGIN' BOY-FRIEND OF YOURS!
ATTAGIRL! YOU'LL MAKE A SECRET AGENT YET!
I...UNDERSTAND! I SHALL TELL... NO ONE!
IF SHE NEEDS ANY HELP, FURY, COUNT ME IN!
SHUDDUP, YA OL' WALRUS!
OH, HAWKEYE... HAWKEYE! HOW CAN I TELL YOU--THAT I MUST LEAVE YOU ONCE MORE?
AND, AT JUST THIS MOMENT, 20,000 FEET BELOW, FIVE AVENGERS RETURN AT THEIR BUTLER'S CALL, TO FIND...
CAPTAIN AMERICA--GONE!
BUT WHERE?
I'VE NO IDEA, MISS! HE RUSHED OUT WITHOUT A WORD OF EXPLANATION!
HE WAS STANDING BY THE MONITOR WHEN WE LEFT! MAYBE HE LEFT A MESSAGE ON THE VIDEO-REPLAY!
ACTIVATE IT--QUICKLY! HE MAY BE IN MORTAL PERIL!

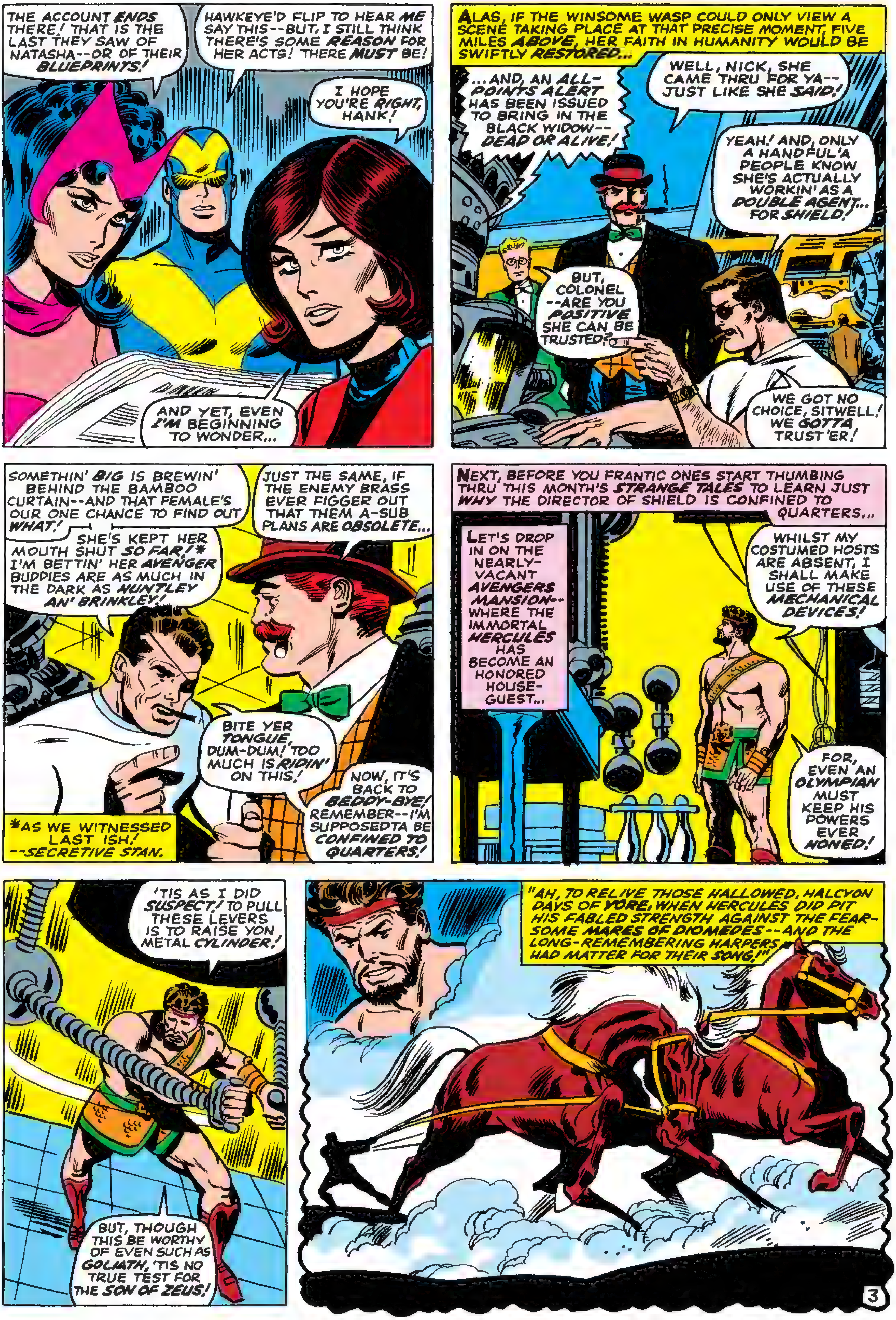

WADDAYA KNOW! OL' WING-HEAD, IN LIVIN' COLOR!
THIS IS CAP! HAD TO CUT OUT, BUT I'LL BE BACK--I HOPE! OVER AND OUT!
KLIK!
WELL, THAT WAS LESS THAN USELESS!
BUT, PERHAPS HAWKEYE WOULD THINK DIFFERENTLY IF HE KNEW THAT THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER RECEIVED A VIDEO MESSAGE FROM ONE CLAIMING TO BE HIS LONG-LOST PARTNER BUCKY--AND THAT, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, HE IS BATTLING FOR HIS LIFE AGAINST THE TREACHEROUS TEAM OF POWER MAN AND THE SINISTER SWORDSMAN...*
*SINCE SMILEY'S SWORN OFF THE FOOTNOTE BIT FOR THE REST OF THE ISH, IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S UP TO YOUR UNABASHED AUTHOR TO TELL YOU THAT THE ABOVE SCENE IS FROM SUSPENSE #88! --RASCALLY ROY.
AS, IN AVENGERS HQ...
EVIDENTLY, CAP LEFT ON SOME HIGHLY PERSONAL MATTER!
IT MUST BE IMPORTANT--OR HE'D NEVER HAVE LEFT HIS POST BEFORE HE WAS RELIEVED!
BUT--WE CAN'T VOTE ON BLACK WIDOW'S ADMISSION UNLESS ALL MEMBERS' VOTES ARE ACCOUNTED FOR!
I MIGHT'A KNOWN YOU'D ALL LOOK FOR SOME KIND OF OUT! AND, THANKS TO CAP, YOU'VE GOT ONE!
BE FAIR, HAWKEYE! YOU KNOW OUR RULES! CAN'T YOU SEE--?
ALL I SEE IS THAT I'VE BEEN PLAYED FOR A SUCKER--BY JOKERS WHO'RE SUPPOSED TO BE MY FRIENDS!
SAVE YOUR ANGER, MY IMPETUOUS ARCHER, FOR A CAUSE WHICH IS NOT LOST...
NATASHA, BABY--WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? WE'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR--
YOU NEED WAIT NO LONGER! I AM LEAVING AMERICA! WITHIN THE HOUR, I SHALL BE... GONE!
GONE? WHERE?
I CANNOT TELL YOU MY EXACT DESTINATION... EXCEPT THAT IT LIES BEHIND THE BAMBOO CURTAIN!
NO--YOU CAN'T, 'TASHA! YOU SAID YOU WERE THRU WITH THOSE CREEPS--FOREVER!
CAN ANYONE EVER TRULY ESCAPE HIS PAST--WHILE HE YET LIVES?
NOW, HOLD ON A MINUTE, NATASHA! THERE MUST BE MORE TO THIS THING THAN MEETS THE EYE!
I MAY NOT BE A CHARTER MEMBER OF YOUR FAN CLUB, WIDOW--BUT, I NEVER HAD YOU FIGURED FOR SELLIN' OUT! WHAT GIVES?
DO NOT QUESTION ME, GOLIATH! THIS IS NOT YOUR CONCERN--


MAYBE IT'S NONE'A *HIS* BUSINESS, NATASHA-- BUT IT SURE IS *MINE!*
I'M THE GUY THAT'S IN *LOVE* WITH YOU, REMEMBER?
WELL, GET *USED* TO THE IDEA, WANDA--'CAUSE I'M BEGINNIN' TO THINK THE LADY *MEANS* WHAT SHE SAYS!
I CAN'T *BELIEVE* IT! BLACK WIDOW-- GOING BACK BEHIND THE *BAMBOO CURTAIN!*
REST ASSURED THAT I *DO*, AVENGER! AS FOR *YOU*, HAWKEYE--*FORGET* ANY FOOLISH THOUGHTS OF ROMANCE BETWEEN US!
FOR, IT WAS FATED NEVER TO *BE!*
I *HAD* TO TELL HAWKEYE THAT LIE! OTHERWISE, HE MIGHT HAVE *FOLLOWED* ME-- AND, I COULD NOT LIVE IF ANY *HARM* SHOULD COME TO HIM!
THUS, IT IS ALL FOR THE *BEST!* AT LEAST, THAT IS WHAT I MUST *TELL* MYSELF!
OKAY, WIDOW--WE'RE *CONVINCED!* NOW, WHY DON'T YOU HOT-FOOT IT *BACK* TO YOUR MURDEROUS CHUMS?
THEY'VE PROBABLY GOT A *LIGHT* BURNIN' IN THE WINDOW!
HANK-- HOW COULD YOU BE SO *CRUEL?*
FOR ONCE, I'M WITH *GOLIATH!* I MUST'A BEEN OUTTA MY *TREE*, THINKIN' THAT A LEOPARD LIKE YOU COULD CHANGE HER SPOTS!
YOU'RE *TRESPASSIN'*, SISTER! THIS PLACE IS FOR... *AVENGERS ONLY!*
VERY WELL! I SHALL *DEPART*-- AND BOTHER YOU *NO MORE!*
OH, 'TASHA-- *'TASHA...*
SLAM!
WELL, NOW THAT SHE'S *GONE*, I CAN SPEAK FREELY! I HAVE SOME *AVENGER BUSINESS* TO PROPOSE...
BUSINESS? AT A TIME LIKE *THIS?*
YAK ABOUT ANYTHING YOU *WANT*, ALL'A YA! I'VE *HAD* IT WITH THE "AVENGERS ASSEMBLE" BIT!
I'M *CUTTIN' OUT* OF THIS COMBO--FOR *GOOD!*
HAWKEYE! SURELY --YOU DO *NOT* REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE *DOING!*
BUT I *DO*, WANDA! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A *LONG* TIME, I KNOW *JUST* WHAT I'M DOIN'!
HERE--KEEP THIS CRUMMY BOW AS A PRESENT FOR THE *NEXT* SAP YA SHANGHAI!
WAIT, HAWKEYE! I--I'M COMING *WITH* YOU!
SUIT YOURSELF, JAN! BUT, BRING ALONG YER *TRANSISTOR RADIO...*
SUDDENLY, I CAN'T *STAND* IT IN THIS ROOM ANY LONGER!
'CAUSE *I* SURE WON'T BE MUCH COMPANY TONIGHT!
HAWKEYE ...JAN... *WAIT!*
THEN, AS THE DOOR SHUTS BEHIND HAWKEYE AND THE WASP...
THIS IS TRULY THE BLACKEST DAY IN THE HISTORY OF THE *AVENGERS!*
YES, MY BROTHER-- IF, INDEED, THE AVENGERS STILL *EXIST!*

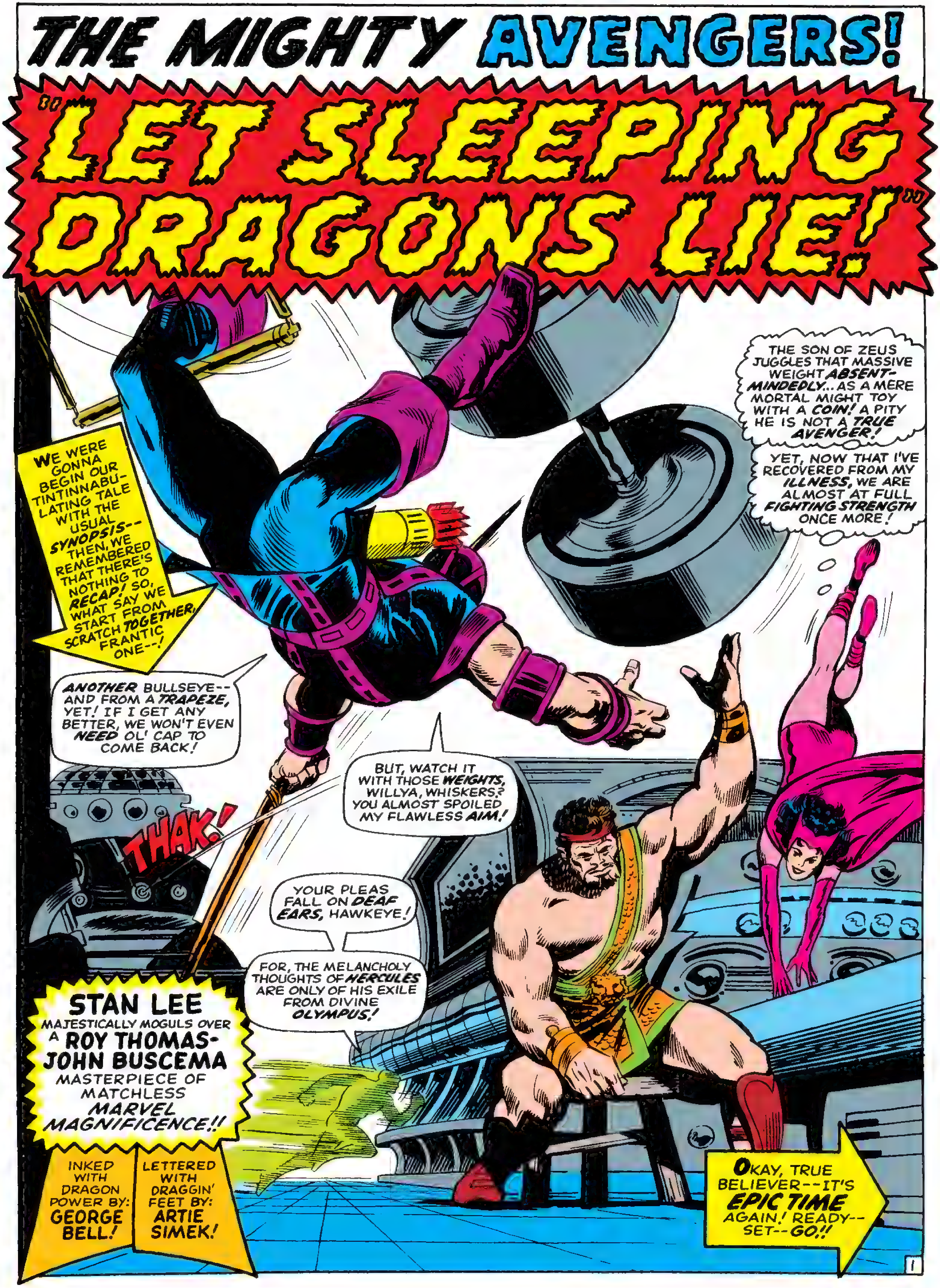
AVENGERS #39 (APRIL 1967)


THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"THE TORMENT... AND THE TRIUMPH!"
SOME THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO LEARN ABOUT FROM A NEWSPAPER! THUS, AS THE MIGHTY AVENGERS PASS BY A NEWSSTAND AFTER A BENEFIT IN NEARBY CENTRAL PARK, THEY...AND ESPECIALLY AN INCREDULOUS HAWKEYE... ARE STARTLED TO BEHOLD BANNER HEADLINES PROCLAIMING--
THE PAPER SAYS THAT NATASHA STOLE A BUNCH OF TOP-SECRET ATOMIC PLANS--THEN DISAPPEARED! SHE MUST INTEND TO TURN THEM OVER TO AMERICA'S ENEMIES!
IT CAN'T BE TRUE! AND YET... WHY ELSE WOULD SHE HAVE TAKEN THEM? WHY? WHY?
BUS STOP
THE BLACK WIDOW--A TRAITOR? IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!
SHE TOLD US THAT SHE WAS LEAVING AMERICA--BUT, WE NEVER IMAGINED THAT SHE MIGHT PLAN TO BETRAY IT!
VOTE THE MARVEL TICKET! STAN LEE EDITOR ROY THOMAS WRITER DON HECK ARTIST GEORGE BELL INKER ART SIMEK LETTERER IRV FORBUSH DOG-CATCHER A CHOICE, NOT AN ECHH-O!
DAILY FLASH
BLACK WIDOW A TRAITOR?
BLACK WIDOW A TRAITOR?
BULLPEN BULLETIN TO BEFUDDLED BROWSERS: WITHIN THESE POWER-PACKED PAGES LURK... THE MAD THINKER AND HIS TRIUMVIRATE OF TERROR! (THAT'S JUST IN CASE YOU THINK YOU PICKED UP A COPY OF BLEEDING-HEART ROMANCES BY MISTAKE! READ ON, TIGER--!)
WE'LL DISCUSS THE MATTER WHEN WE GET BACK TO AVENGERS HQ! THEN--HAWKEYE, WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? I JUST WANNA BE ALONE FOR A WHILE! GOTTA THINK THINGS OUT...
I'LL BE ALONG LATER... MAYBE...


THEN, AS THE FORM OF THE DOWNCAST ARCHER VANISHES AROUND A CORNER, A CRIMSON-GLOVED *HAND* RETRIEVES HIS FALLEN TABLOID...
THE ENTIRE ACCOUNT IS *BEYOND BELIEF!* ONLY DAYS AGO, SHE WISHED TO BECOME AN *AVENGER!*
TRUE, MY BROTHER...
DAILY FLA
BLACK WIDOW A TRAI
BUT REMEMBER, THERE WAS SOME *OPPOSITION* TO LETTING HER JOIN!
BY OPPOSITION, YOU MEAN *ME*, WANDA! WE MIGHT AS WELL CALL A SPADE A *SPADE!*
BUT, I NEVER HAD NATASHA FIGURED FOR A *TRAITOR* TO HER NEWLY-ADOPTED COUNTRY! WHAT'S MORE, I STILL *DON'T!*
NEITHER DO *I!* READ US THE *WHOLE STORY,* WANDA--FROM THE *BEGINNING!*
"VERY WELL, JAN! A FEW HOURS AGO, A DEFENSE INSTALLATION IN ARIZONA WAS THE VICTIM OF A ONE-WOMAN ATTACK... IN THE PERSON OF THE NOTORIOUS BLACK WIDOW...!"
WHO GOES THERE? HALT, OR-- *UNNNHH!*
ZASP!
I HALT FOR *NO ONE!*
THE ALARM SYSTEM REPORTS THE BREAK-THROUGH *STRAIGHT AHEAD,* AND--*LOOK!* IT'S THE *BLACK WIDOW!*
SHE'S COMING OUT OF THE *NUCLEAR PLANNING* SECTION!
"HOWEVER, BEFORE THE MASKED SPY-QUEEN COULD ESCAPE, MORE SECURITY FORCES RUSHED TO THE SCENE..."
THAT MUST MEAN--SHE'S STOLEN THE BLUEPRINTS FOR THE NAVY'S *A-SUB!* USE YOUR RIFLE, MAN--SCARE HER *DOWN!*
I'M *TRYIN'*, SIR! I'M HITTIN' ALL AROUND HER--BUT, SHE WON'T *SCARE!*
KRAK!
THEN, WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE! JUST *WOUND* HER IF POSSIBLE--BUT *STOP* HER!
FOOLS! DID YOU THINK TO CAPTURE ONE WHO CAN RACE ALONG THE SHEEREST *WALLS?*
PTING!
PTING!
THEY ARE *CRACK SHOTS!* I AM FORTUNATE THAT MY FLEXIBLE *SUCTION SHOES* ALLOW ME TO ELUDE THEM!
NOW TO ROUND THIS BUILDING--AND FADE INTO THE *DARKNESS!*


THE ACCOUNT ENDS THERE! THAT IS THE LAST THEY SAW OF NATASHA--OR OF THEIR BLUEPRINTS!
HAWKEYE'D FLIP TO HEAR ME SAY THIS--BUT, I STILL THINK THERE'S SOME REASON FOR HER ACTS! THERE MUST BE!
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, HANK!
AND YET, EVEN I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER...
ALAS, IF THE WINSOME WASP COULD ONLY VIEW A SCENE TAKING PLACE AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT, FIVE MILES ABOVE, HER FAITH IN HUMANITY WOULD BE SWIFTLY RESTORED...
...AND, AN ALL-POINTS ALERT HAS BEEN ISSUED TO BRING IN THE BLACK WIDOW--DEAD OR ALIVE!
WELL, NICK, SHE CAME THRU FOR YA--JUST LIKE SHE SAID!
YEAH! AND, ONLY A HANDFUL'A PEOPLE KNOW SHE'S ACTUALLY WORKIN' AS A DOUBLE AGENT...FOR SHIELD!
BUT, COLONEL --ARE YOU POSITIVE SHE CAN BE TRUSTED?
WE GOT NO CHOICE, SITWELL! WE GOTTA TRUST 'ER!
SOMETHIN' BIG IS BREWIN' BEHIND THE BAMBOO CURTAIN--AND THAT FEMALE'S OUR ONE CHANCE TO FIND OUT WHAT!
JUST THE SAME, IF THE ENEMY BRASS EVER FIGGER OUT THAT THEM A-SUB PLANS ARE OBSOLETE...
SHE'S KEPT HER MOUTH SHUT SO FAR!* I'M BETTIN' HER AVENGER BUDDIES ARE AS MUCH IN THE DARK AS HUNTLEY AN' BRINKLEY!
BITE YER TONGUE, DUM-DUM! TOO MUCH IS RIDIN' ON THIS!
NOW, IT'S BACK TO BEDDY-BYE! REMEMBER--I'M SUPPOSEDTA BE CONFINED TO QUARTERS!
*AS WE WITNESSED LAST ISH! --SECRETIVE STAN.
NEXT, BEFORE YOU FRANTIC ONES START THUMBING THRU THIS MONTH'S STRANGE TALES TO LEARN JUST WHY THE DIRECTOR OF SHIELD IS CONFINED TO QUARTERS...
LET'S DROP IN ON THE NEARLY-VACANT AVENGERS MANSION--WHERE THE IMMORTAL HERCULES HAS BECOME AN HONORED HOUSE-GUEST...
WHILST MY COSTUMED HOSTS ARE ABSENT, I SHALL MAKE USE OF THESE MECHANICAL DEVICES!
FOR, EVEN AN OLYMPIAN MUST KEEP HIS POWERS EVER HONED!
'TIS AS I DID SUSPECT! TO PULL THESE LEVERS IS TO RAISE YON METAL CYLINDER!
BUT, THOUGH THIS BE WORTHY OF EVEN SUCH AS GOLIATH, 'TIS NO TRUE TEST FOR THE SON OF ZEUS!
"AH, TO RELIVE THOSE HALLOWED, HALCYON DAYS OF YORE, WHEN HERCULES DID PIT HIS FABLED STRENGTH AGAINST THE FEARSOME MARES OF DIOMEDES--AND THE LONG-REMEMBERING HARPERS HAD MATTER FOR THEIR SONG!"

AVENGERS #41 (JUNE 1967)


THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"LET SLEEPING DRAGONS LIE!"
WE WERE GONNA BEGIN OUR TINTINNABULATING TALE WITH THE USUAL SYNOPSIS-- THEN, WE REMEMBERED THAT THERE'S NOTHING TO RECAP! SO, WHAT SAY WE START FROM SCRATCH TOGETHER, FRANTIC ONE--!
THE SON OF ZEUS JUGGLES THAT MASSIVE WEIGHT ABSENT-MINDEDLY... AS A MERE MORTAL MIGHT TOY WITH A COIN! A PITY HE IS NOT A TRUE AVENGER!
YET, NOW THAT I'VE RECOVERED FROM MY ILLNESS, WE ARE ALMOST AT FULL FIGHTING STRENGTH ONCE MORE!
ANOTHER BULLSEYE-- AND FROM A TRAPEZE, YET! IF I GET ANY BETTER, WE WON'T EVEN NEED OL' CAP TO COME BACK!
BUT, WATCH IT WITH THOSE WEIGHTS, WILLYA, WHISKERS? YOU ALMOST SPOILED MY FLAWLESS AIM!
THAK!
YOUR PLEAS FALL ON DEAF EARS, HAWKEYE!
FOR, THE MELANCHOLY THOUGHTS OF HERCULES ARE ONLY OF HIS EXILE FROM DIVINE OLYMPUS!
STAN LEE MAJESTICALLY MOGULS OVER A ROY THOMAS-JOHN BUSCEMA MASTERPIECE OF MATCHLESS MARVEL MAGNIFICENCE!!
INKED WITH DRAGON POWER BY: GEORGE BELL!
LETTERED WITH DRAGGIN' FEET BY: ARTIE SIMEK!
OKAY, TRUE BELIEVER--IT'S EPIC TIME AGAIN! READY-- SET--GO!!
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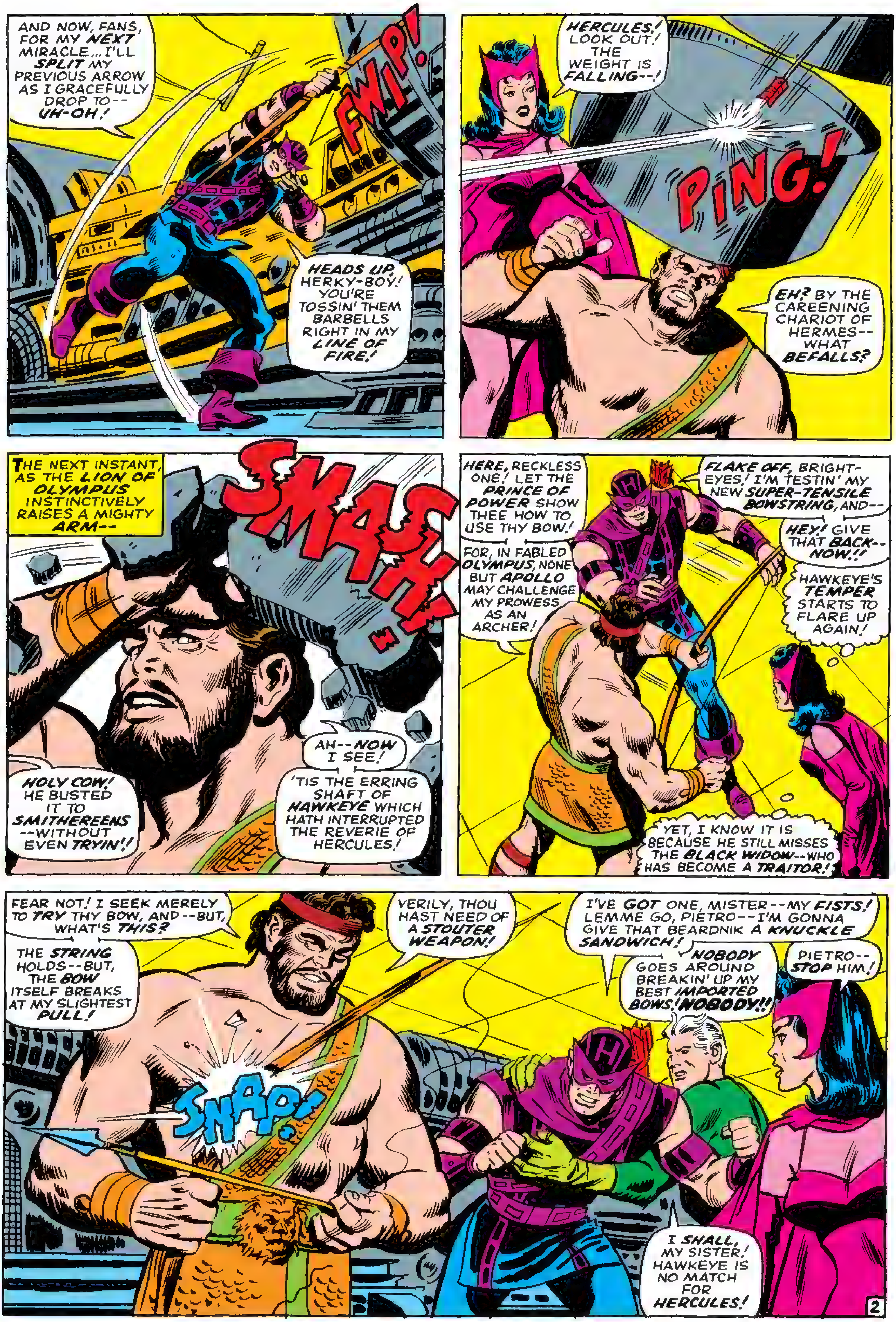
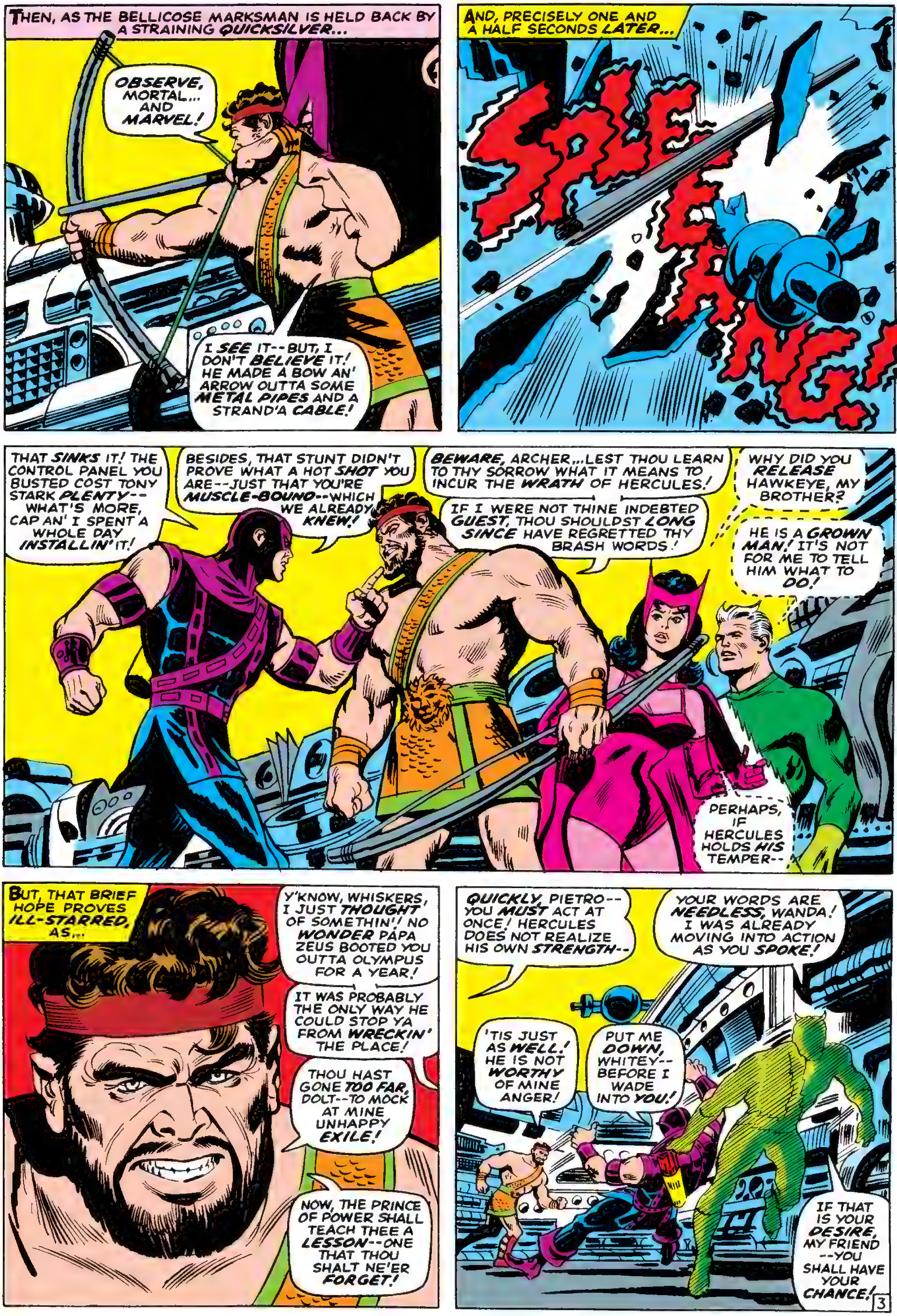
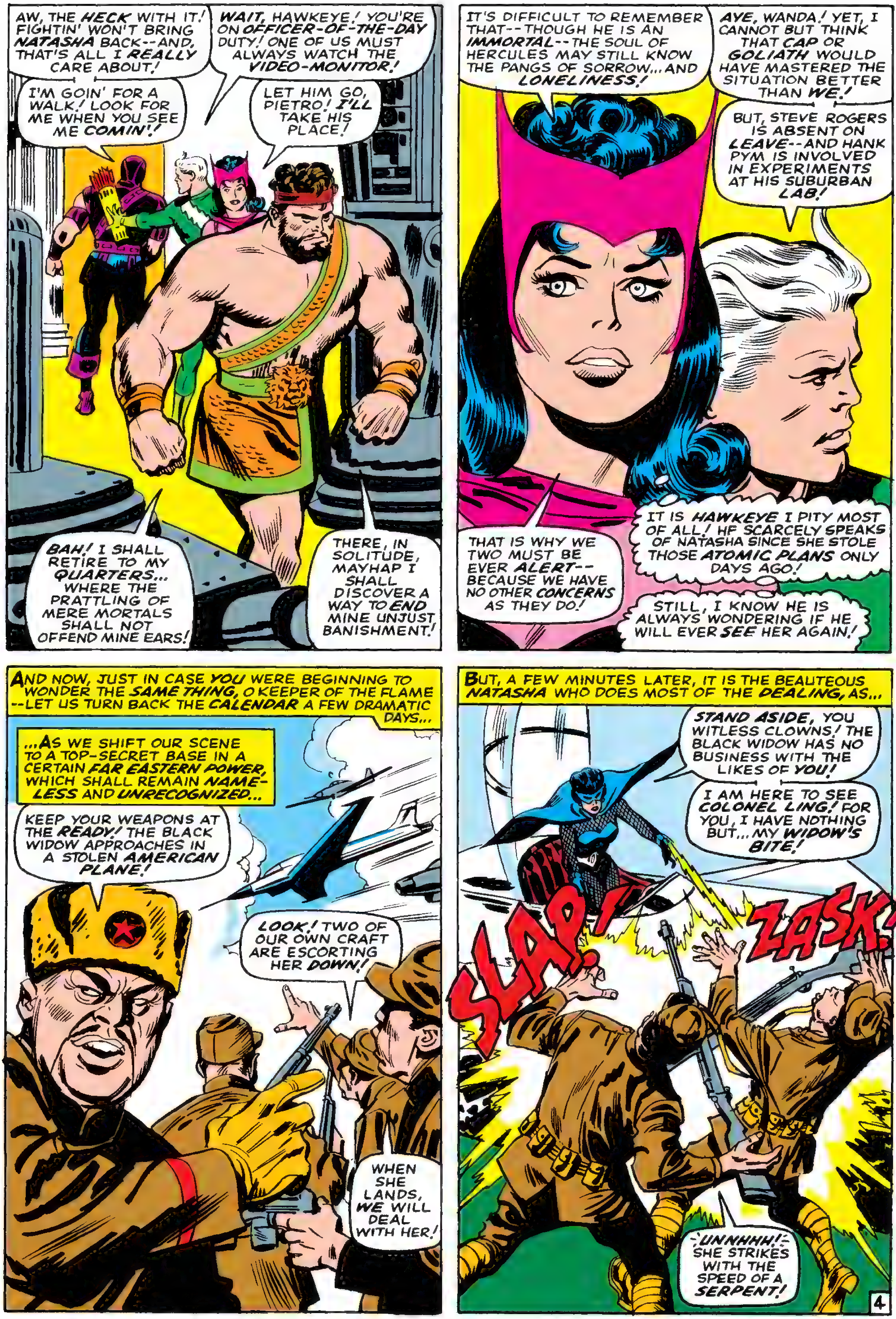
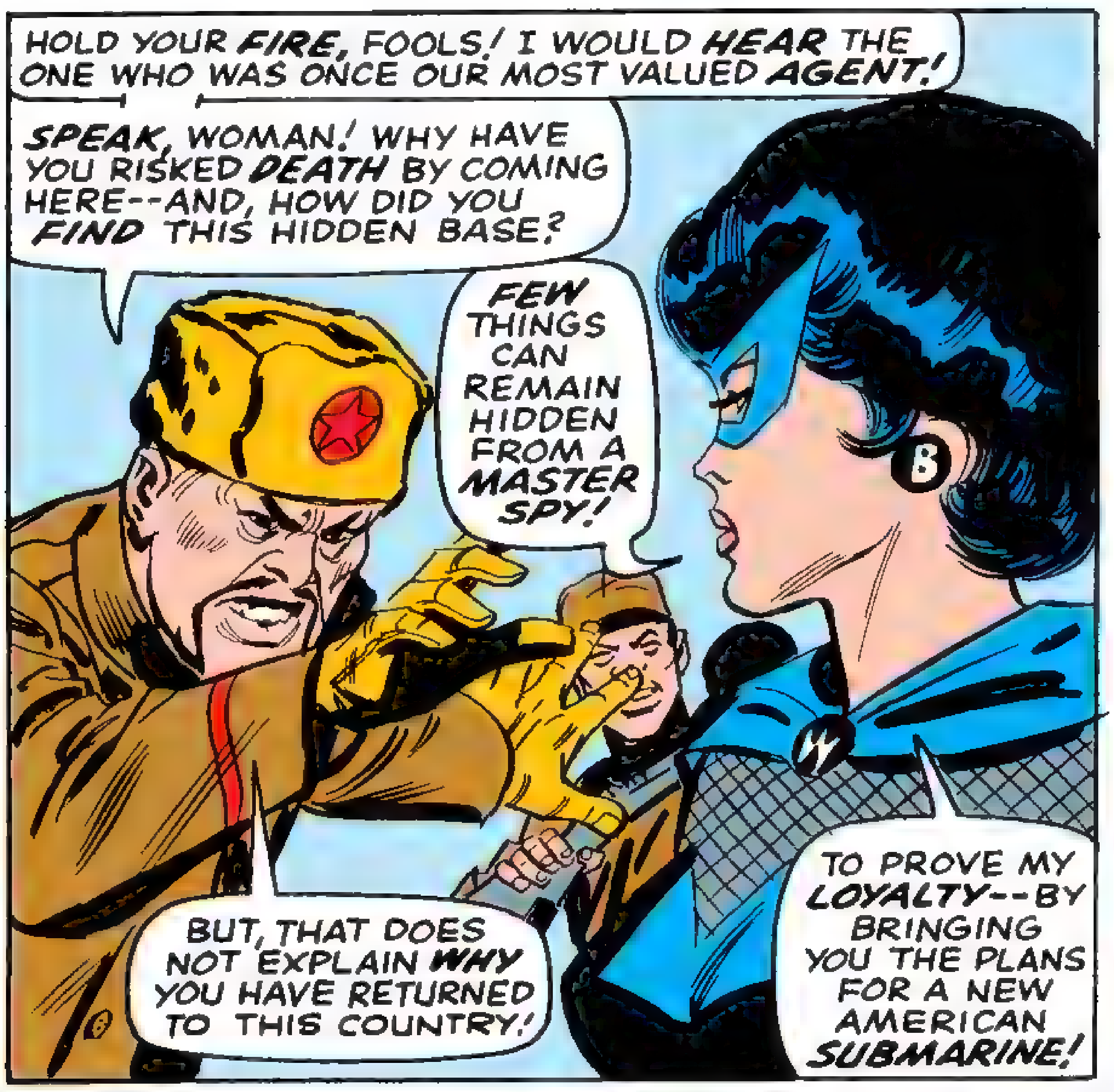
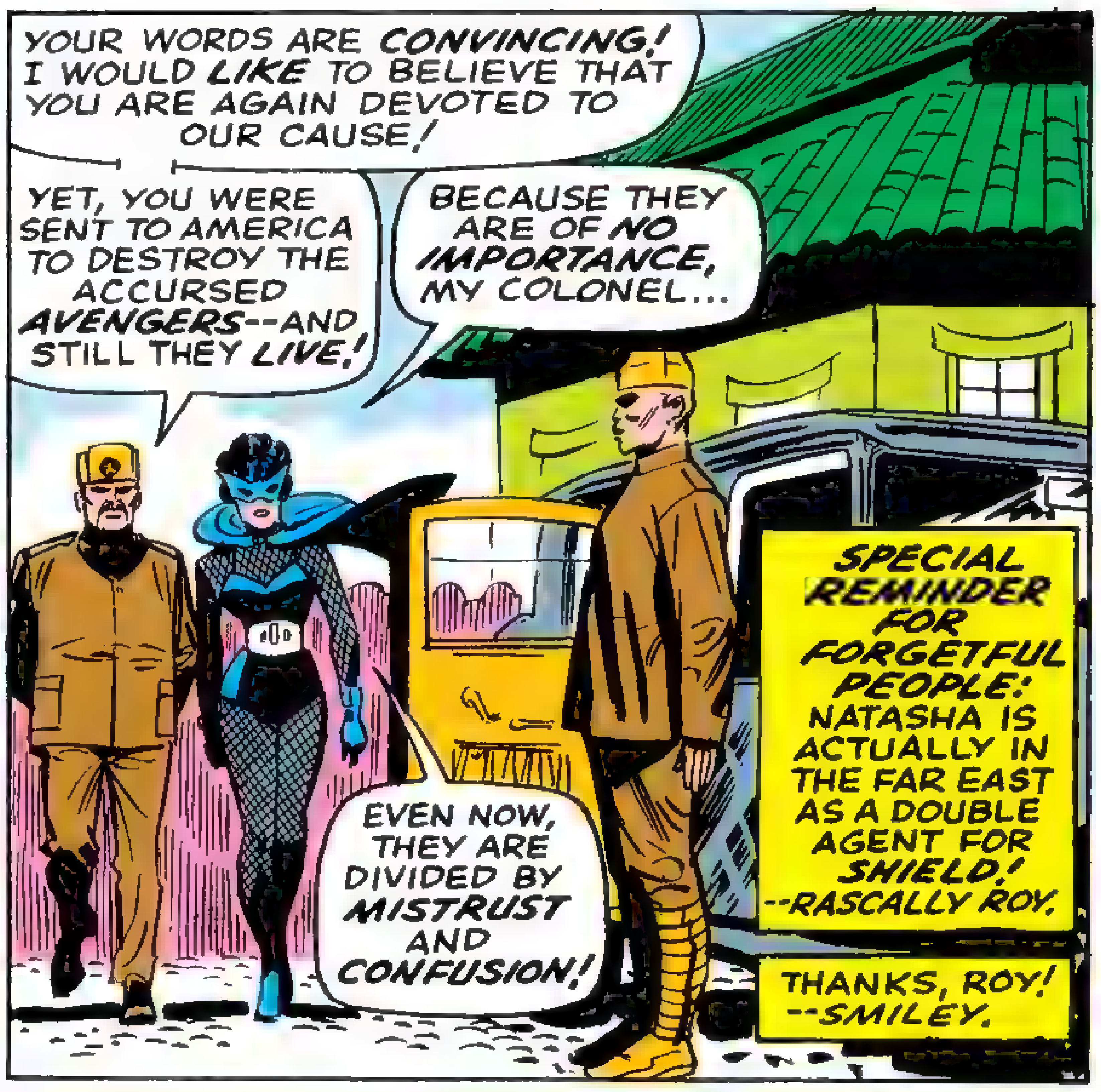
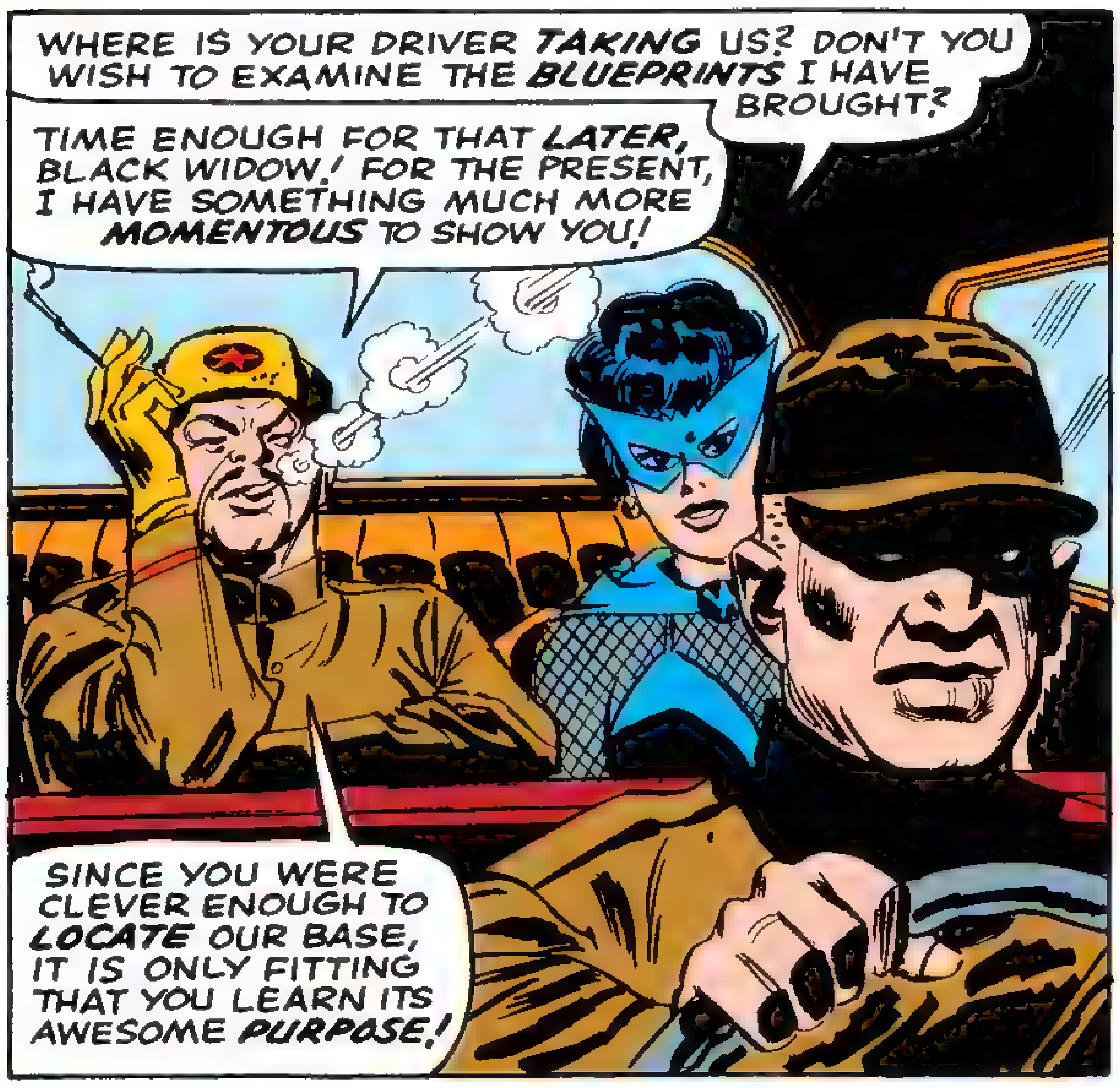

AND NOW, FANS, FOR MY NEXT MIRACLE... I'LL SPLIT MY PREVIOUS ARROW AS I GRACEFULLY DROP TO-- UH-OH!
FWIP!
HEADS UP, HERKY-BOY! YOU'RE TOSSIN' THEM BARBELLS RIGHT IN MY LINE OF FIRE!
HERCULES! LOOK OUT! THE WEIGHT IS FALLING--!
PING!
EH? BY THE CAREENING CHARIOT OF HERMES-- WHAT BEFALLS?
THE NEXT INSTANT, AS THE LION OF OLYMPUS INSTINCTIVELY RAISES A MIGHTY ARM--
SMASH!
HOLY COW! HE BUSTED IT TO SMITHEREENS --WITHOUT EVEN TRYIN'!
AH--NOW I SEE!
'TIS THE ERRING SHAFT OF HAWKEYE WHICH HATH INTERRUPTED THE REVERIE OF HERCULES!
HERE, RECKLESS ONE! LET THE PRINCE OF POWER SHOW THEE HOW TO USE THY BOW!
FOR, IN FABLED OLYMPUS, NONE BUT APOLLO MAY CHALLENGE MY PROWESS AS AN ARCHER!
FLAKE OFF, BRIGHT-EYES! I'M TESTIN' MY NEW SUPER-TENSILE BOWSTRING, AND--
HEY! GIVE THAT BACK-- NOW!!
HAWKEYE'S TEMPER STARTS TO FLARE UP AGAIN!
YET, I KNOW IT IS BECAUSE HE STILL MISSES THE BLACK WIDOW--WHO HAS BECOME A TRAITOR!
FEAR NOT! I SEEK MERELY TO TRY THY BOW, AND--BUT, WHAT'S THIS?
THE STRING HOLDS--BUT, THE BOW ITSELF BREAKS AT MY SLIGHTEST PULL!
SNAP!
VERILY, THOU HAST NEED OF A STOUTER WEAPON!
I'VE GOT ONE, MISTER--MY FISTS! LEMME GO, PIETRO--I'M GONNA GIVE THAT BEARDNIK A KNUCKLE SANDWICH!
NOBODY GOES AROUND BREAKIN' UP MY BEST IMPORTED BOWS! NOBODY!!
PIETRO-- STOP HIM!
I SHALL, MY SISTER! HAWKEYE IS NO MATCH FOR HERCULES!

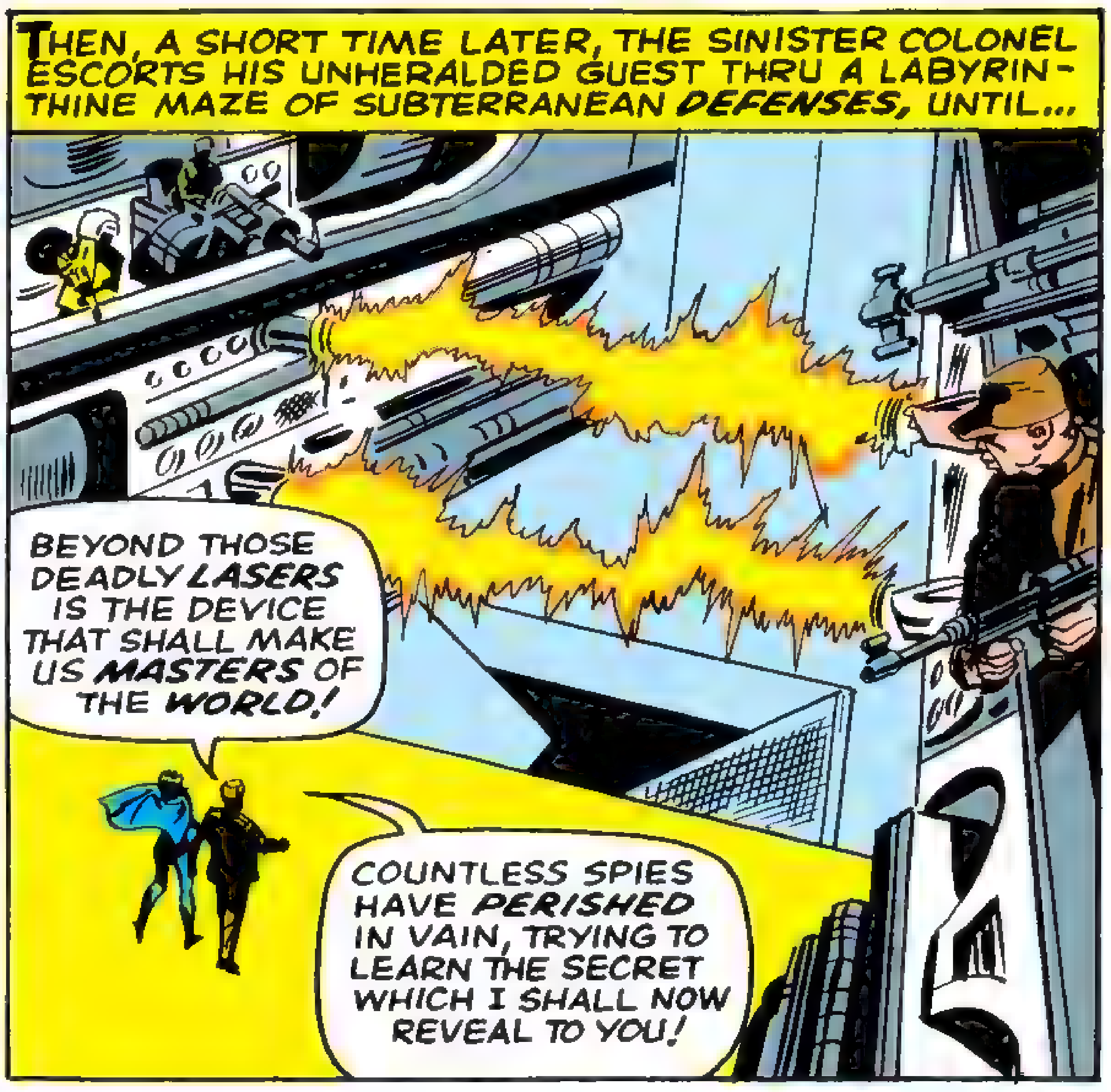

THEN, AS THE BELLICOSE MARKSMAN IS HELD BACK BY A STRAINING QUICKSILVER...
OBSERVE, MORTAL... AND MARVEL!
I SEE IT--BUT, I DON'T BELIEVE IT! HE MADE A BOW AN' ARROW OUTTA SOME METAL PIPES AND A STRAND'A CABLE!
AND, PRECISELY ONE AND A HALF SECONDS LATER...
SPLE-FANG!
THAT SINKS IT! THE CONTROL PANEL YOU BUSTED COST TONY STARK PLENTY--WHAT'S MORE, CAP AN' I SPENT A WHOLE DAY INSTALLIN' IT!
BESIDES, THAT STUNT DIDN'T PROVE WHAT A HOT SHOT YOU ARE--JUST THAT YOU'RE MUSCLE-BOUND--WHICH WE ALREADY KNEW!
BEWARE, ARCHER...LEST THOU LEARN TO THY SORROW WHAT IT MEANS TO INCUR THE WRATH OF HERCULES!
IF I WERE NOT THINE INDEBTED GUEST, THOU SHOULDST LONG SINCE HAVE REGRETTED THY BRASH WORDS!
WHY DID YOU RELEASE HAWKEYE, MY BROTHER?
HE IS A GROWN MAN! IT'S NOT FOR ME TO TELL HIM WHAT TO DO!
PERHAPS, IF HERCULES HOLDS HIS TEMPER--
BUT, THAT BRIEF HOPE PROVES ILL-STARRED, AS...
Y'KNOW, WHISKERS, I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHIN'! NO WONDER PAPA ZEUS BOOTED YOU OUTTA OLYMPUS FOR A YEAR!
IT WAS PROBABLY THE ONLY WAY HE COULD STOP YA FROM WRECKIN' THE PLACE!
THOU HAST GONE TOO FAR, DOLT--TO MOCK AT MINE UNHAPPY EXILE!
NOW, THE PRINCE OF POWER SHALL TEACH THEE A LESSON--ONE THAT THOU SHALT NE'ER FORGET!
QUICKLY, PIETRO--YOU MUST ACT AT ONCE! HERCULES DOES NOT REALIZE HIS OWN STRENGTH--
YOUR WORDS ARE NEEDLESS, WANDA! I WAS ALREADY MOVING INTO ACTION AS YOU SPOKE!
'TIS JUST AS WELL! HE IS NOT WORTHY OF MINE ANGER!
PUT ME DOWN, WHITEY--BEFORE I WADE INTO YOU!
IF THAT IS YOUR DESIRE, MY FRIEND--YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR CHANCE!

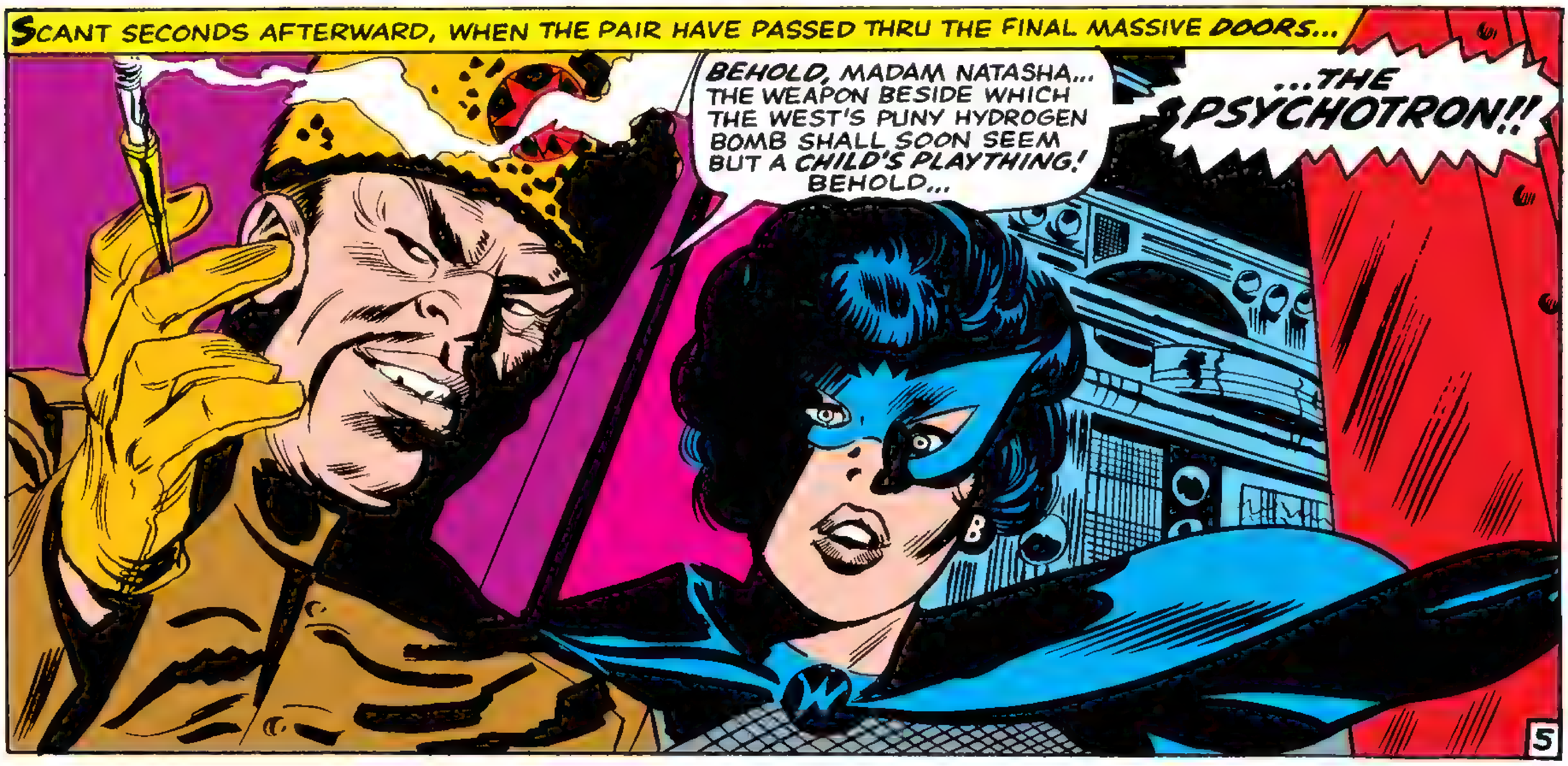

AW, THE HECK WITH IT! FIGHTIN' WON'T BRING NATASHA BACK--AND, THAT'S ALL I REALLY CARE ABOUT!
WAIT, HAWKEYE! YOU'RE ON OFFICER-OF-THE-DAY DUTY! ONE OF US MUST ALWAYS WATCH THE VIDEO-MONITOR!
I'M GOIN' FOR A WALK! LOOK FOR ME WHEN YOU SEE ME COMIN'!
LET HIM GO, PIETRO! I'LL TAKE HIS PLACE!
BAH! I SHALL RETIRE TO MY QUARTERS... WHERE THE PRATTLING OF MERE MORTALS SHALL NOT OFFEND MINE EARS!
THERE, IN SOLITUDE, MAYHAP I SHALL DISCOVER A WAY TO END MINE UNJUST BANISHMENT!
IT'S DIFFICULT TO REMEMBER THAT--THOUGH HE IS AN IMMORTAL--THE SOUL OF HERCULES MAY STILL KNOW THE PANGS OF SORROW... AND LONELINESS!
AYE, WANDA! YET, I CANNOT BUT THINK THAT CAP OR GOLIATH WOULD HAVE MASTERED THE SITUATION BETTER THAN WE!
BUT, STEVE ROGERS IS ABSENT ON LEAVE--AND HANK PYM IS INVOLVED IN EXPERIMENTS AT HIS SUBURBAN LAB!
THAT IS WHY WE TWO MUST BE EVER ALERT--BECAUSE WE HAVE NO OTHER CONCERNS AS THEY DO!
IT IS HAWKEYE I PITY MOST OF ALL! HE SCARCELY SPEAKS OF NATASHA SINCE SHE STOLE THOSE ATOMIC PLANS ONLY DAYS AGO!
STILL, I KNOW HE IS ALWAYS WONDERING IF HE WILL EVER SEE HER AGAIN!
AND NOW, JUST IN CASE YOU WERE BEGINNING TO WONDER THE SAME THING, O KEEPER OF THE FLAME--LET US TURN BACK THE CALENDAR A FEW DRAMATIC DAYS...
...AS WE SHIFT OUR SCENE TO A TOP-SECRET BASE IN A CERTAIN FAR EASTERN POWER, WHICH SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS AND UNRECOGNIZED...
KEEP YOUR WEAPONS AT THE READY! THE BLACK WIDOW APPROACHES IN A STOLEN AMERICAN PLANE!
LOOK! TWO OF OUR OWN CRAFT ARE ESCORTING HER DOWN!
WHEN SHE LANDS, WE WILL DEAL WITH HER!
BUT, A FEW MINUTES LATER, IT IS THE BEAUTEOUS NATASHA WHO DOES MOST OF THE DEALING, AS...
STAND ASIDE, YOU WITLESS CLOWNS! THE BLACK WIDOW HAS NO BUSINESS WITH THE LIKES OF YOU!
I AM HERE TO SEE COLONEL LING! FOR YOU, I HAVE NOTHING BUT... MY WIDOW'S BITE!
SLAP!
ZASK!
UNNHHH! SHE STRIKES WITH THE SPEED OF A SERPENT!

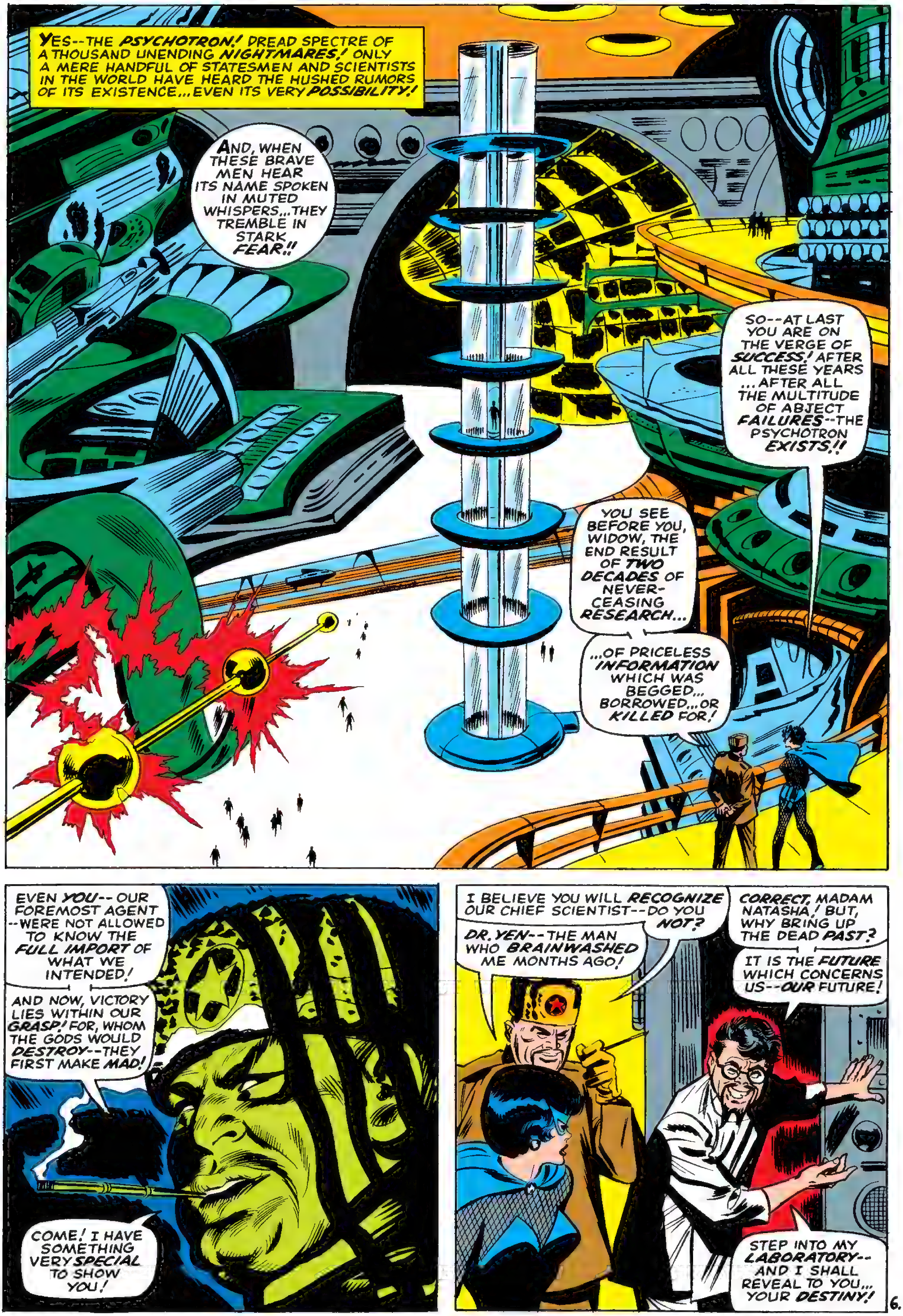

HOLD YOUR *FIRE*, FOOLS! I WOULD *HEAR* THE ONE WHO WAS ONCE OUR MOST VALUED *AGENT*!
SPEAK, WOMAN! WHY HAVE YOU RISKED *DEATH* BY COMING HERE--AND, HOW DID YOU *FIND* THIS HIDDEN BASE?
FEW THINGS CAN REMAIN HIDDEN FROM A *MASTER SPY*!
BUT, THAT DOES NOT EXPLAIN *WHY* YOU HAVE RETURNED TO THIS COUNTRY!
TO PROVE MY *LOYALTY*--BY BRINGING YOU THE PLANS FOR A NEW AMERICAN *SUBMARINE*!

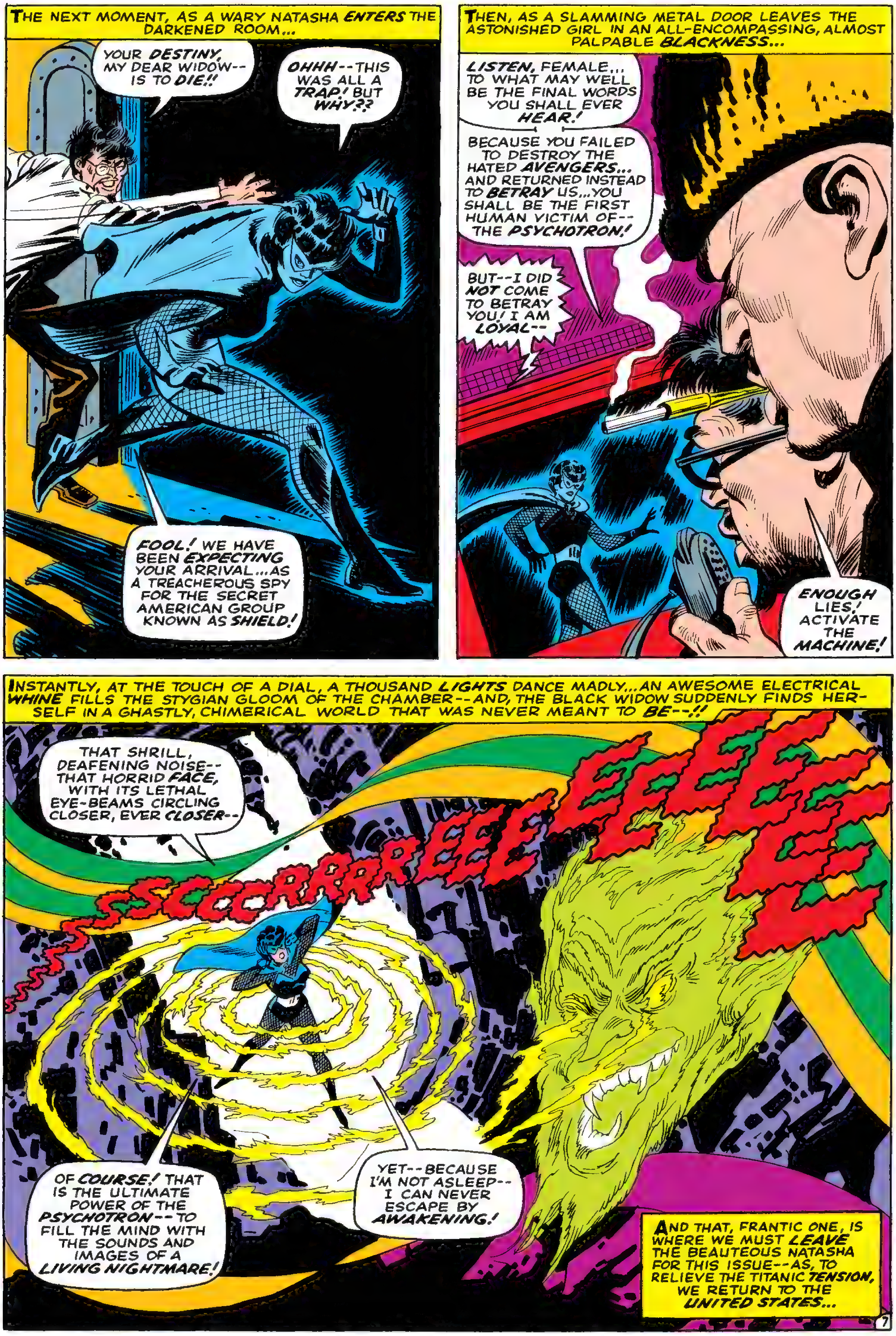

YOUR WORDS ARE *CONVINCING*! I WOULD *LIKE* TO BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE AGAIN DEVOTED TO OUR CAUSE!
YET, YOU WERE SENT TO AMERICA TO DESTROY THE ACCURSED *AVENGERS*--AND STILL THEY *LIVE*!
BECAUSE THEY ARE OF *NO IMPORTANCE*, MY COLONEL...
EVEN NOW, THEY ARE DIVIDED BY *MISTRUST* AND *CONFUSION*!
SPECIAL REMINDER FOR FORGETFUL PEOPLE: NATASHA IS ACTUALLY IN THE FAR EAST AS A DOUBLE AGENT FOR *SHIELD*! --*RASCALLY ROY.*
THANKS, ROY! --*SMILEY.*

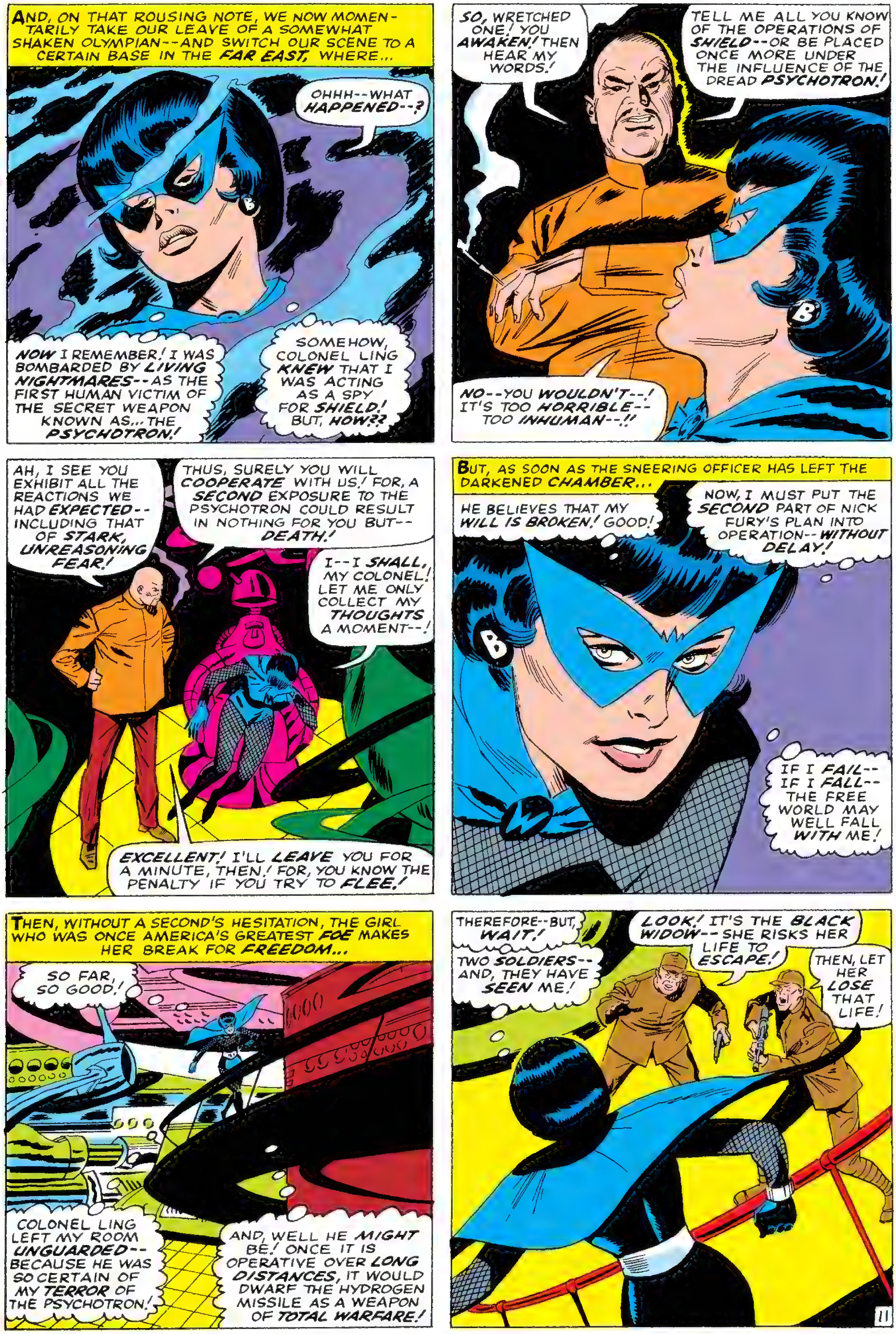

WHERE IS YOUR DRIVER *TAKING* US? DON'T YOU WISH TO EXAMINE THE *BLUEPRINTS* I HAVE BROUGHT?
TIME ENOUGH FOR THAT *LATER*, BLACK WIDOW! FOR THE PRESENT, I HAVE SOMETHING MUCH MORE *MOMENTOUS* TO SHOW YOU!
SINCE YOU WERE CLEVER ENOUGH TO *LOCATE* OUR BASE, IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT YOU LEARN ITS AWESOME *PURPOSE*!

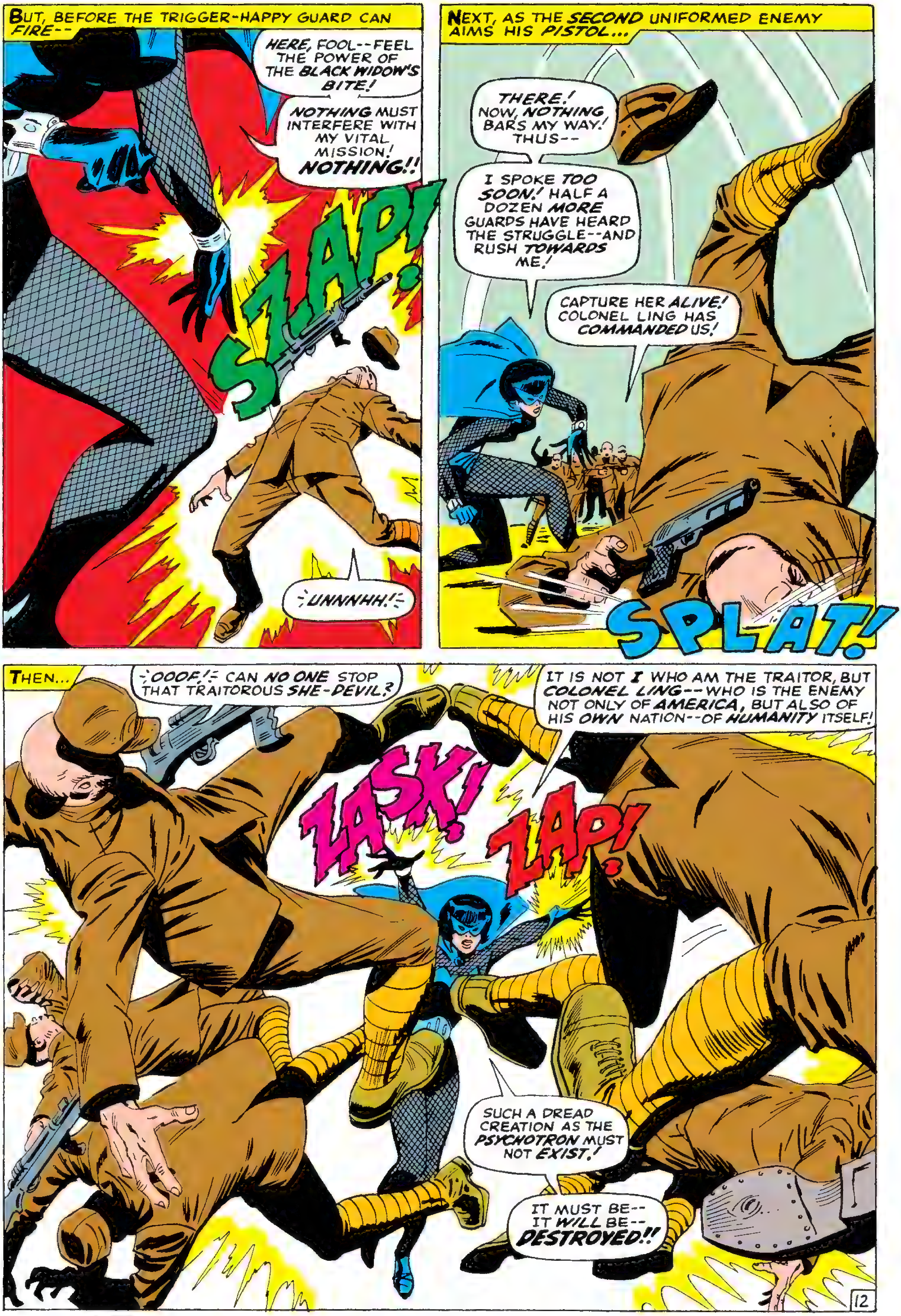

THEN, A SHORT TIME LATER, THE SINISTER COLONEL ESCORTS HIS UNHERALDED GUEST THRU A LABYRINTHINE MAZE OF SUBTERRANEAN *DEFENSES*, UNTIL...
BEYOND THOSE DEADLY *LASERS* IS THE DEVICE THAT SHALL MAKE US *MASTERS* OF THE *WORLD*!
COUNTLESS SPIES HAVE *PERISHED* IN VAIN, TRYING TO LEARN THE SECRET WHICH I SHALL NOW REVEAL TO YOU!

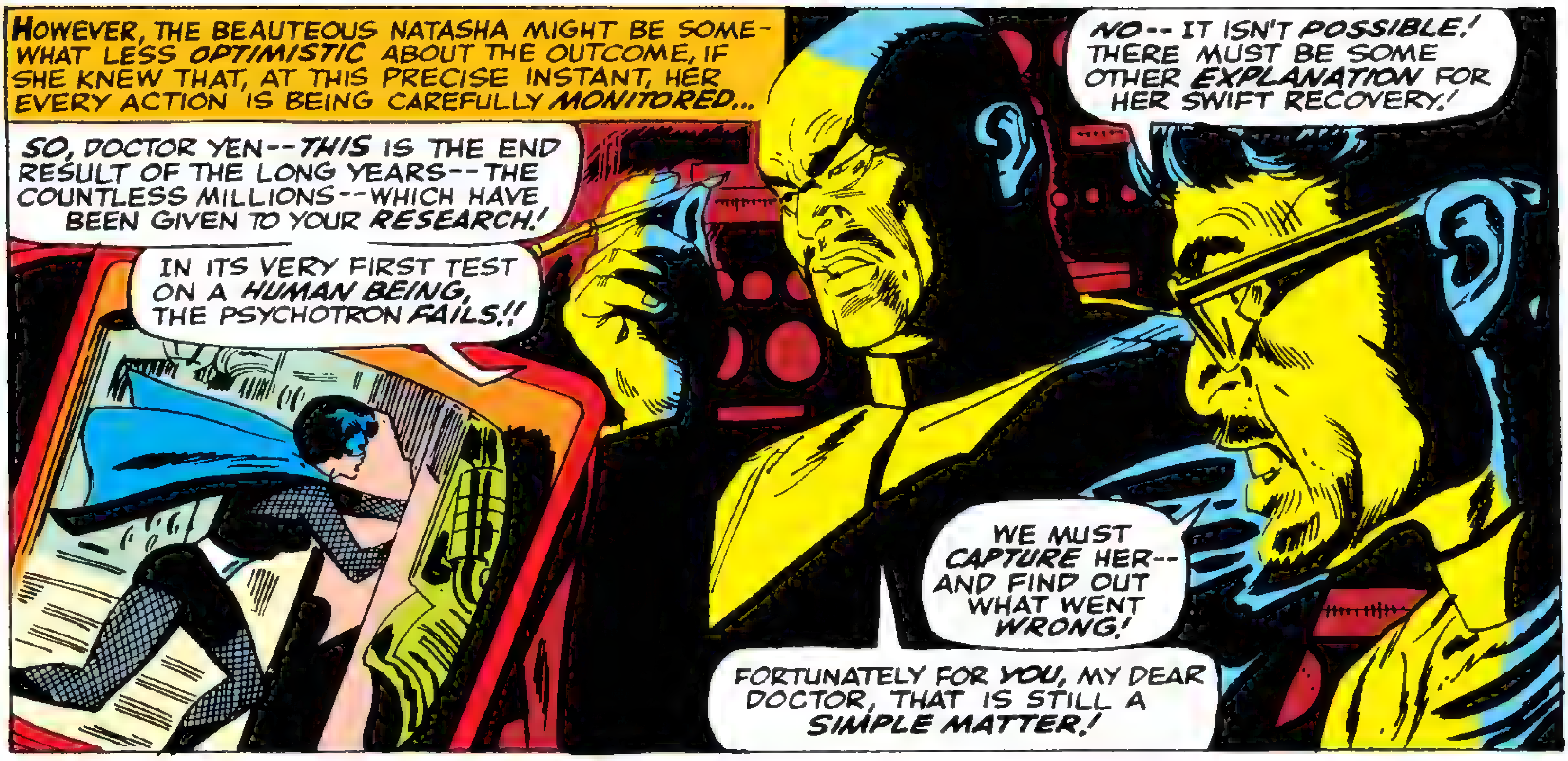

SCANT SECONDS AFTERWARD, WHEN THE PAIR HAVE PASSED THRU THE FINAL MASSIVE *DOORS*...
BEHOLD, MADAM NATASHA... THE WEAPON BESIDE WHICH THE WEST'S PUNY HYDROGEN BOMB SHALL SOON SEEM BUT A *CHILD'S PLAYTHING*! BEHOLD...
...THE *PSYCHOTRON*!!

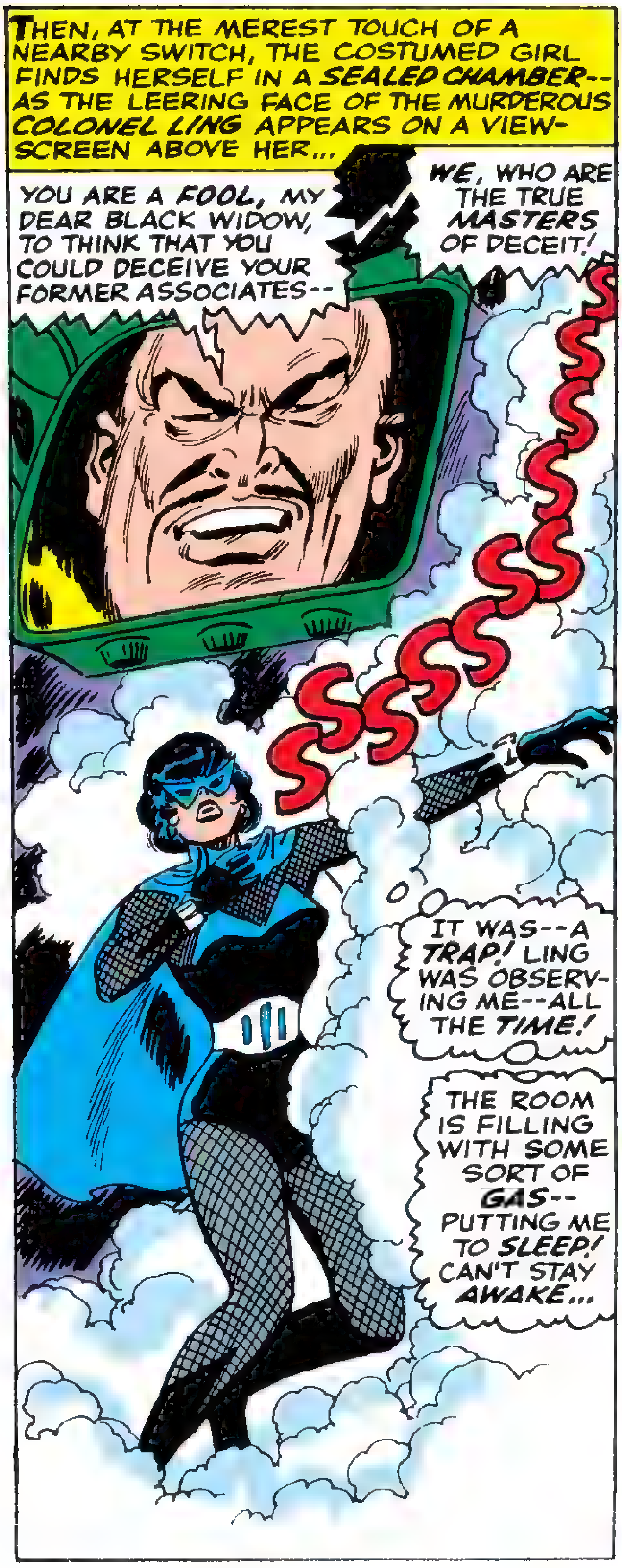

YES--THE PSYCHOTRON! DREAD SPECTRE OF A THOUSAND UNENDING NIGHTMARES! ONLY A MERE HANDFUL OF STATESMEN AND SCIENTISTS IN THE WORLD HAVE HEARD THE HUSHED RUMORS OF ITS EXISTENCE...EVEN ITS VERY POSSIBILITY!
AND, WHEN THESE BRAVE MEN HEAR ITS NAME SPOKEN IN MUTED WHISPERS...THEY TREMBLE IN STARK FEAR!!
SO--AT LAST YOU ARE ON THE VERGE OF SUCCESS! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS ...AFTER ALL THE MULTITUDE OF ABJECT FAILURES--THE PSYCHOTRON EXISTS!!
YOU SEE BEFORE YOU, WIDOW, THE END RESULT OF TWO DECADES OF NEVER-CEASING RESEARCH...
...OF PRICELESS INFORMATION WHICH WAS BEGGED... BORROWED...OR KILLED FOR!
EVEN YOU--OUR FOREMOST AGENT --WERE NOT ALLOWED TO KNOW THE FULL IMPORT OF WHAT WE INTENDED!
AND NOW, VICTORY LIES WITHIN OUR GRASP! FOR, WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY--THEY FIRST MAKE MAD!
COME! I HAVE SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL TO SHOW YOU!
I BELIEVE YOU WILL RECOGNIZE OUR CHIEF SCIENTIST--DO YOU NOT?
DR. YEN--THE MAN WHO BRAINWASHED ME MONTHS AGO!
CORRECT, MADAM NATASHA! BUT, WHY BRING UP THE DEAD PAST?
IT IS THE FUTURE WHICH CONCERNS US--OUR FUTURE!
STEP INTO MY LABORATORY-- AND I SHALL REVEAL TO YOU... YOUR DESTINY!

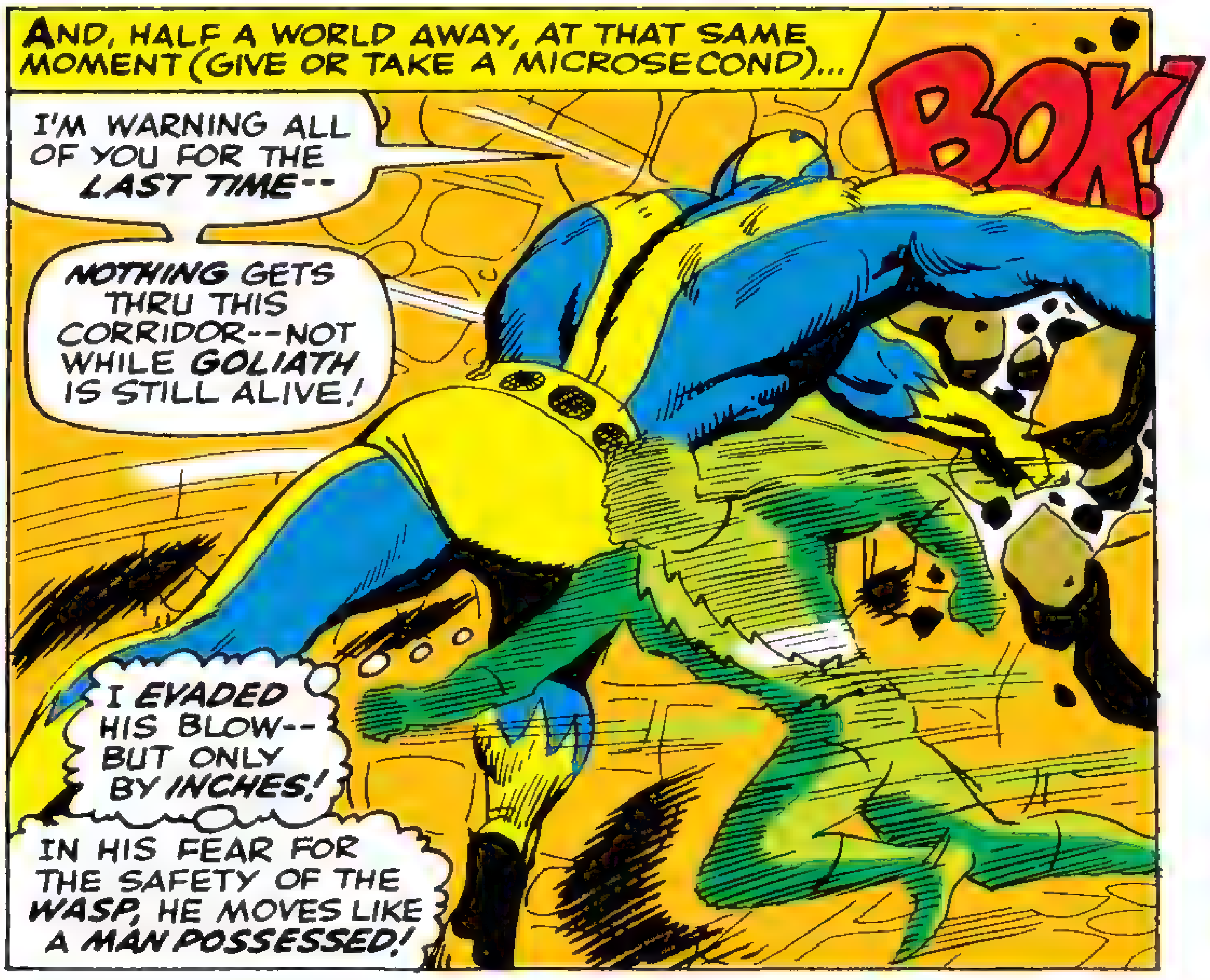

THE NEXT MOMENT, AS A WARY NATASHA *ENTERS* THE DARKENED ROOM...
YOUR *DESTINY*, MY DEAR WIDOW-- IS TO *DIE!!*
OHHH--THIS WAS ALL A *TRAP!* BUT *WHY??*
FOOL! WE HAVE BEEN *EXPECTING* YOUR ARRIVAL...AS A TREACHEROUS SPY FOR THE SECRET AMERICAN GROUP KNOWN AS *SHIELD!*
THEN, AS A SLAMMING METAL DOOR LEAVES THE ASTONISHED GIRL IN AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING, ALMOST PALPABLE *BLACKNESS...*
LISTEN, FEMALE... TO WHAT MAY WELL BE THE FINAL WORDS YOU SHALL EVER *HEAR!*
BECAUSE YOU FAILED TO DESTROY THE HATED *AVENGERS*... AND RETURNED INSTEAD TO *BETRAY* US...YOU SHALL BE THE FIRST HUMAN VICTIM OF-- THE *PSYCHOTRON!*
BUT--I DID *NOT* COME TO BETRAY YOU! I AM *LOYAL*--
ENOUGH LIES! ACTIVATE THE *MACHINE!*
INSTANTLY, AT THE TOUCH OF A DIAL, A THOUSAND *LIGHTS* DANCE MADLY... AN AWESOME ELECTRICAL *WHINE* FILLS THE STYGIAN GLOOM OF THE CHAMBER--AND, THE BLACK WIDOW SUDDENLY FINDS HERSELF IN A GHASTLY, CHIMERICAL WORLD THAT WAS NEVER MEANT TO *BE--!!*
THAT SHRILL, DEAFENING NOISE-- THAT HORRID *FACE*, WITH ITS LETHAL EYE-BEAMS CIRCLING CLOSER, EVER *CLOSER*--
SSSCCCRRRREEEEEEEEE
OF *COURSE!* THAT IS THE ULTIMATE POWER OF THE *PSYCHOTRON*--TO FILL THE MIND WITH THE SOUNDS AND IMAGES OF A *LIVING NIGHTMARE!*
YET--BECAUSE I'M NOT ASLEEP-- I CAN NEVER ESCAPE BY *AWAKENING!*
AND THAT, FRANTIC ONE, IS WHERE WE MUST *LEAVE* THE BEAUTEOUS NATASHA FOR THIS ISSUE--AS, TO RELIEVE THE TITANIC *TENSION*, WE RETURN TO THE *UNITED STATES...*

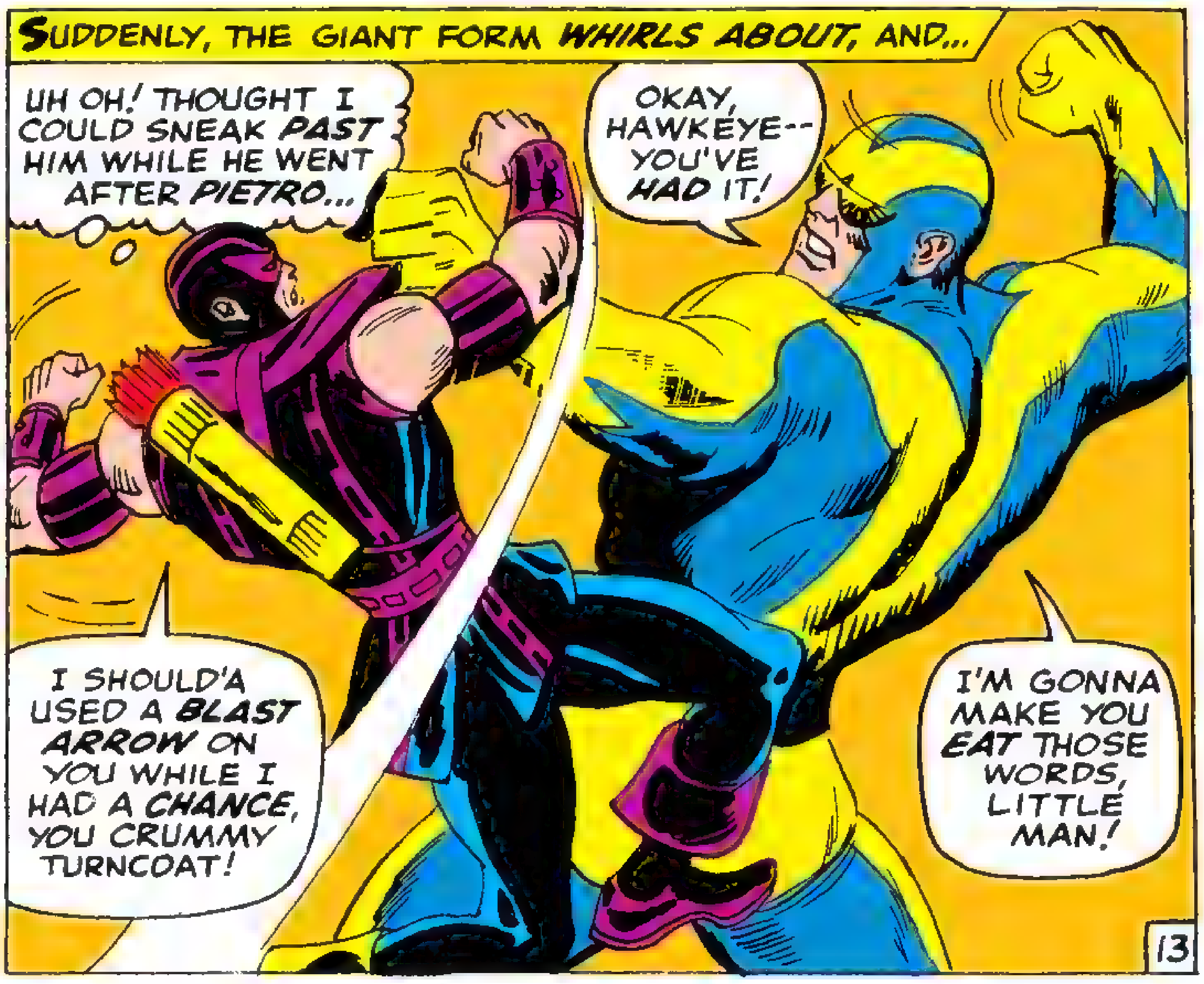

AND, ON THAT ROUSING NOTE, WE NOW MOMENTARILY TAKE OUR LEAVE OF A SOMEWHAT SHAKEN OLYMPIAN--AND SWITCH OUR SCENE TO A CERTAIN BASE IN THE FAR EAST, WHERE...
OHHH--WHAT HAPPENED--?
NOW I REMEMBER! I WAS BOMBARDED BY LIVING NIGHTMARES--AS THE FIRST HUMAN VICTIM OF THE SECRET WEAPON KNOWN AS... THE PSYCHOTRON!
SOMEHOW, COLONEL LING KNEW THAT I WAS ACTING AS A SPY FOR SHIELD! BUT, HOW??
SO, WRETCHED ONE! YOU AWAKEN! THEN HEAR MY WORDS!
TELL ME ALL YOU KNOW OF THE OPERATIONS OF SHIELD--OR BE PLACED ONCE MORE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON!
NO--YOU WOULDN'T--! IT'S TOO HORRIBLE--TOO INHUMAN--!!
AH, I SEE YOU EXHIBIT ALL THE REACTIONS WE HAD EXPECTED--INCLUDING THAT OF STARK, UNREASONING FEAR!
THUS, SURELY YOU WILL COOPERATE WITH US! FOR, A SECOND EXPOSURE TO THE PSYCHOTRON COULD RESULT IN NOTHING FOR YOU BUT--DEATH!
I--I SHALL, MY COLONEL! LET ME ONLY COLLECT MY THOUGHTS A MOMENT--!
EXCELLENT! I'LL LEAVE YOU FOR A MINUTE, THEN! FOR, YOU KNOW THE PENALTY IF YOU TRY TO FLEE!
BUT, AS SOON AS THE SNEERING OFFICER HAS LEFT THE DARKENED CHAMBER...
HE BELIEVES THAT MY WILL IS BROKEN! GOOD!
NOW, I MUST PUT THE SECOND PART OF NICK FURY'S PLAN INTO OPERATION--WITHOUT DELAY!
IF I FAIL--IF I FALL--THE FREE WORLD MAY WELL FALL WITH ME!
THEN, WITHOUT A SECOND'S HESITATION, THE GIRL WHO WAS ONCE AMERICA'S GREATEST FOE MAKES HER BREAK FOR FREEDOM...
SO FAR, SO GOOD!
COLONEL LING LEFT MY ROOM UNGUARDED--BECAUSE HE WAS SO CERTAIN OF MY TERROR OF THE PSYCHOTRON!
AND, WELL HE MIGHT BE! ONCE IT IS OPERATIVE OVER LONG DISTANCES, IT WOULD DWARF THE HYDROGEN MISSILE AS A WEAPON OF TOTAL WARFARE!
THEREFORE--BUT, WAIT!
TWO SOLDIERS--AND, THEY HAVE SEEN ME!
LOOK! IT'S THE BLACK WIDOW--SHE RISKS HER LIFE TO ESCAPE!
THEN, LET HER LOSE THAT LIFE!
11

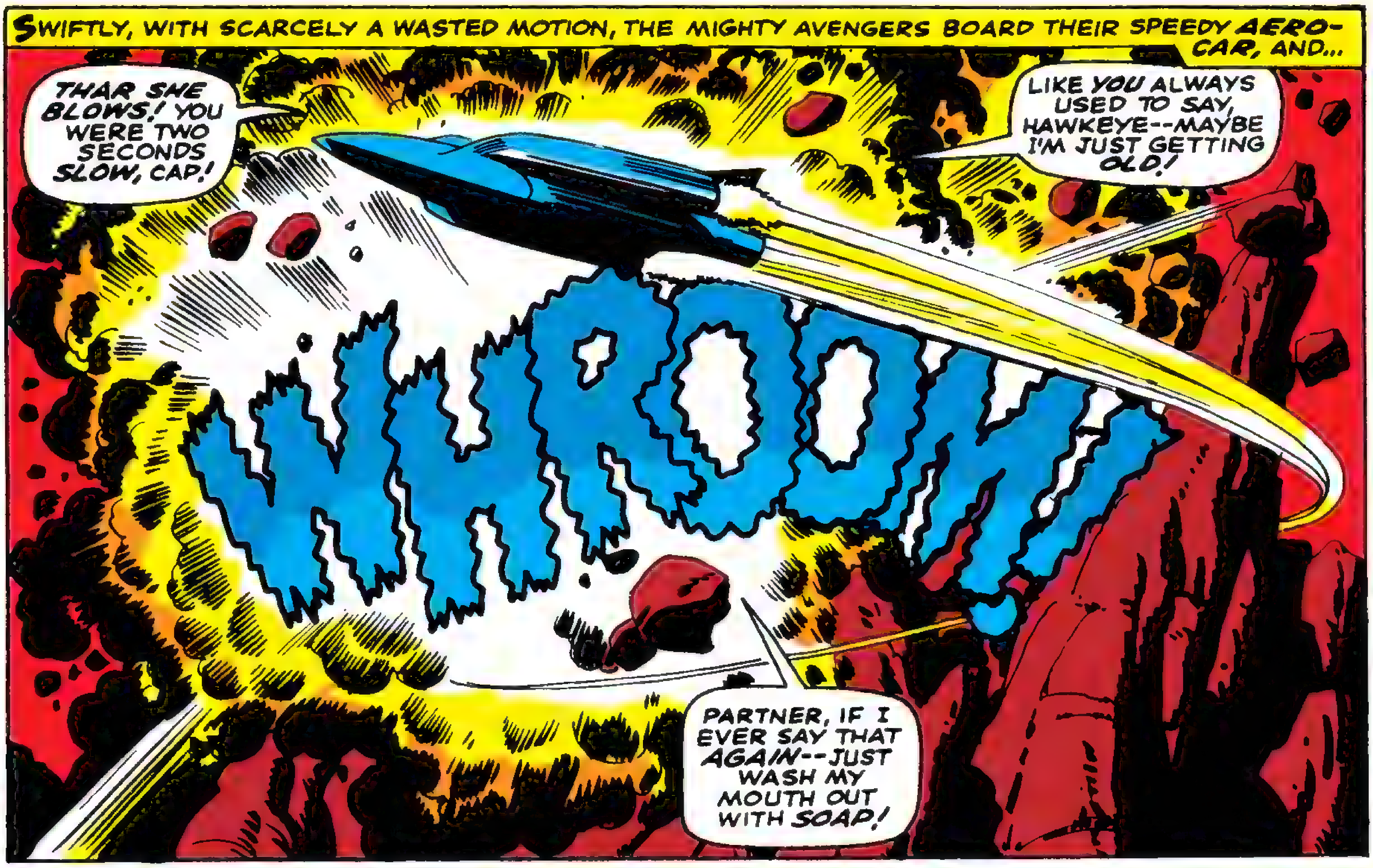

BUT, BEFORE THE TRIGGER-HAPPY GUARD CAN FIRE--
HERE, FOOL--FEEL THE POWER OF THE BLACK WIDOW'S BITE!
NOTHING MUST INTERFERE WITH MY VITAL MISSION! NOTHING!!
SZAP!
-UNNNHH!-
NEXT, AS THE SECOND UNIFORMED ENEMY AIMS HIS PISTOL...
THERE! NOW, NOTHING BARS MY WAY! THUS--
I SPOKE TOO SOON! HALF A DOZEN MORE GUARDS HAVE HEARD THE STRUGGLE--AND RUSH TOWARDS ME!
CAPTURE HER ALIVE! COLONEL LING HAS COMMANDED US!
SPLAT!
THEN...
-OOOF!- CAN NO ONE STOP THAT TRAITOROUS SHE-DEVIL?
IT IS NOT I WHO AM THE TRAITOR, BUT COLONEL LING--WHO IS THE ENEMY NOT ONLY OF AMERICA, BUT ALSO OF HIS OWN NATION--OF HUMANITY ITSELF!
ZASK!
ZAP!
SUCH A DREAD CREATION AS THE PSYCHOTRON MUST NOT EXIST!
IT MUST BE-- IT WILL BE-- DESTROYED!!

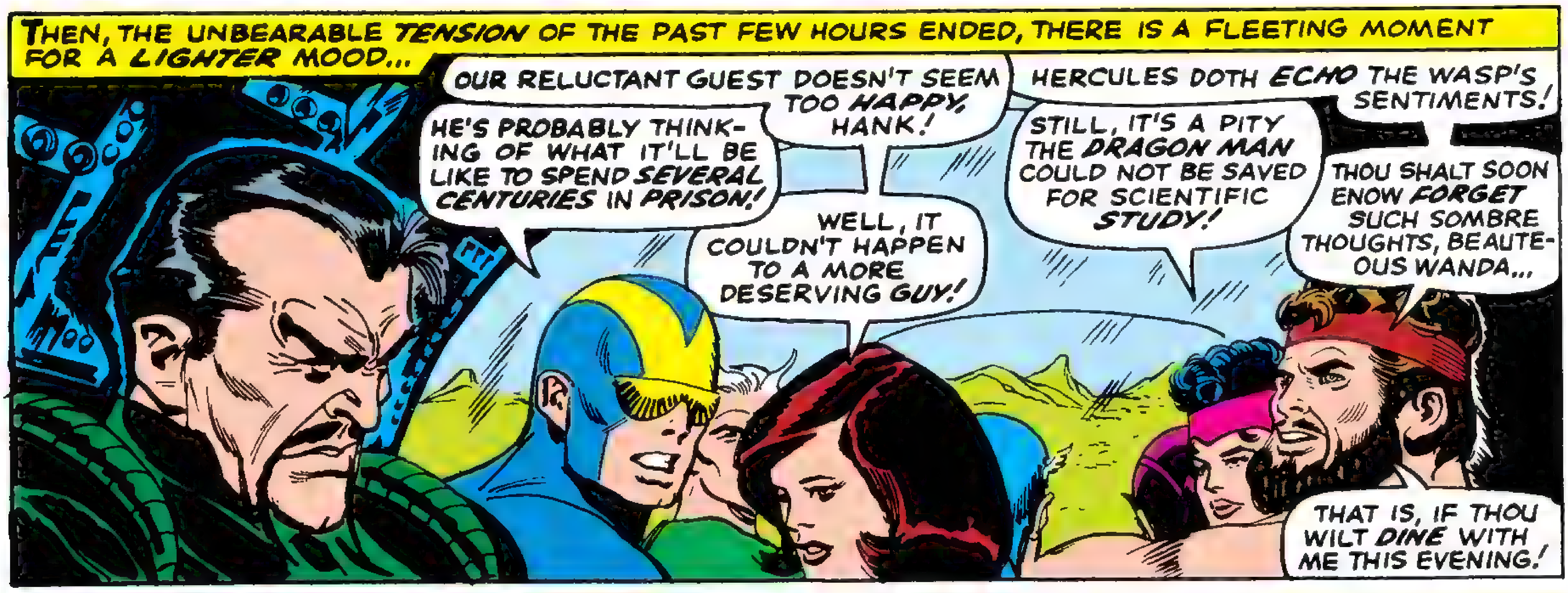

HOWEVER, THE BEAUTEOUS NATASHA MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT LESS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME, IF SHE KNEW THAT, AT THIS PRECISE INSTANT, HER EVERY ACTION IS BEING CAREFULLY MONITORED...
SO, DOCTOR YEN--THIS IS THE END RESULT OF THE LONG YEARS--THE COUNTLESS MILLIONS--WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO YOUR RESEARCH!
IN ITS VERY FIRST TEST ON A HUMAN BEING, THE PSYCHOTRON FAILS!!
NO-- IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER EXPLANATION FOR HER SWIFT RECOVERY!
WE MUST CAPTURE HER--AND FIND OUT WHAT WENT WRONG!
FORTUNATELY FOR YOU, MY DEAR DOCTOR, THAT IS STILL A SIMPLE MATTER!

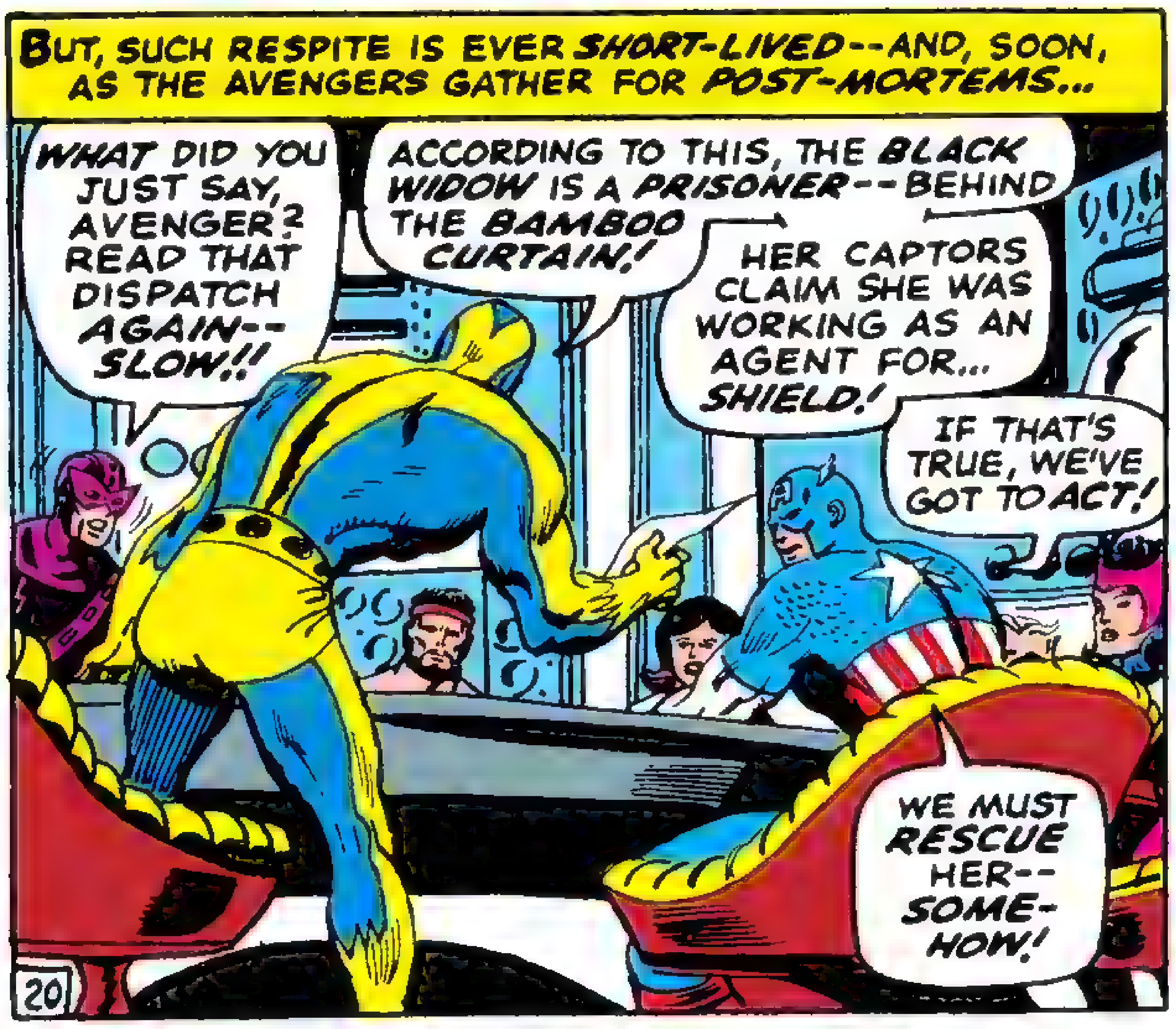

THEN, AT THE MEREST TOUCH OF A NEARBY SWITCH, THE COSTUMED GIRL FINDS HERSELF IN A SEALED CHAMBER--AS THE LEERING FACE OF THE MURDEROUS COLONEL LING APPEARS ON A VIEW-SCREEN ABOVE HER...
YOU ARE A FOOL, MY DEAR BLACK WIDOW, TO THINK THAT YOU COULD DECEIVE YOUR FORMER ASSOCIATES--
WE, WHO ARE THE TRUE MASTERS OF DECEIT!
SSSSSSSSSSS
IT WAS--A TRAP! LING WAS OBSERVING ME--ALL THE TIME!
THE ROOM IS FILLING WITH SOME SORT OF GAS--PUTTING ME TO SLEEP! CAN'T STAY AWAKE...

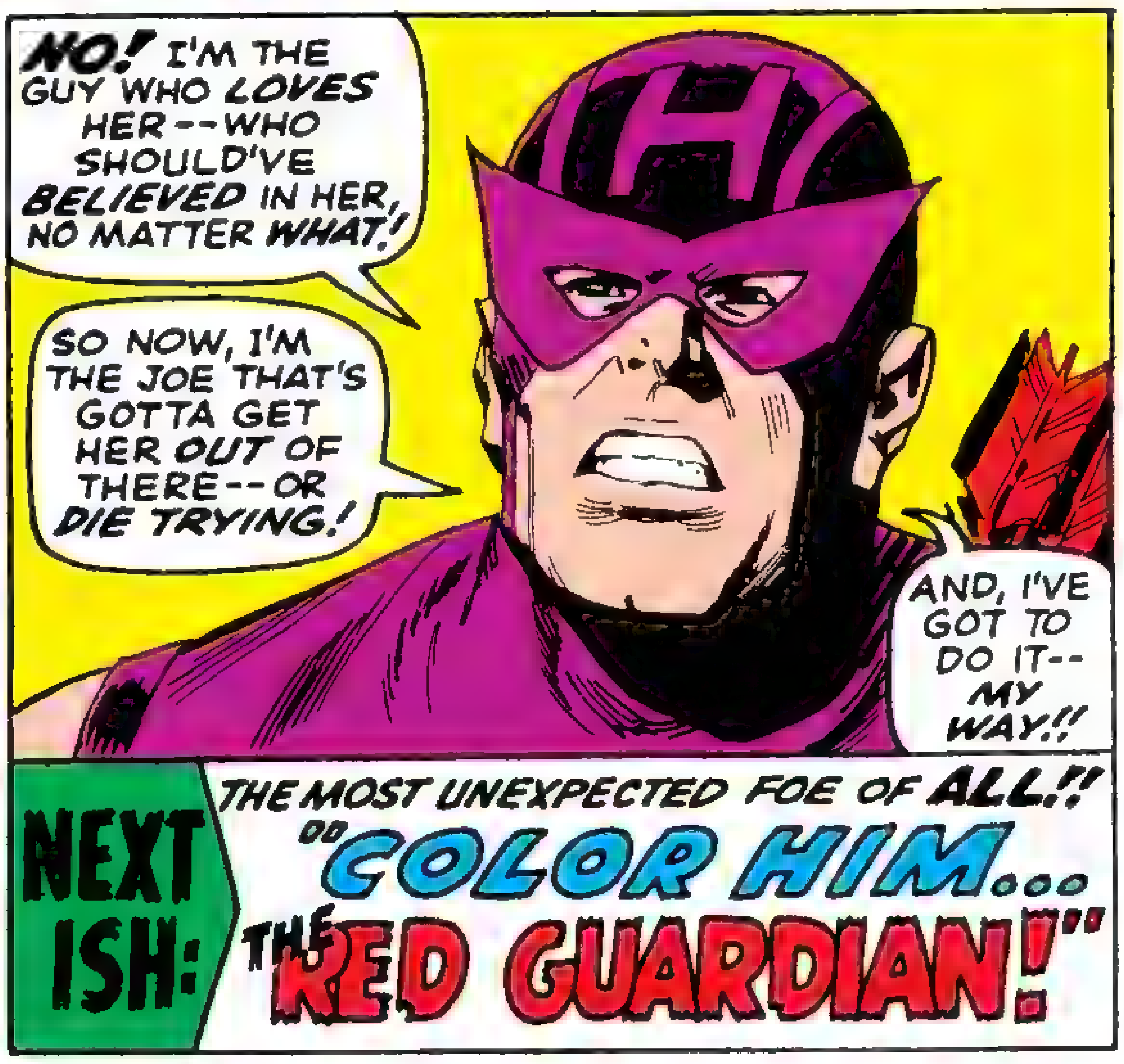

AND, HALF A WORLD AWAY, AT THAT SAME MOMENT (GIVE OR TAKE A MICROSECOND)...
BOK!
I'M WARNING ALL OF YOU FOR THE LAST TIME--
NOTHING GETS THRU THIS CORRIDOR--NOT WHILE GOLIATH IS STILL ALIVE!
I EVADED HIS BLOW--BUT ONLY BY INCHES!
IN HIS FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF THE WASP, HE MOVES LIKE A MAN POSSESSED!


SUDDENLY, THE GIANT FORM WHIRLS ABOUT, AND...
UH OH! THOUGHT I COULD SNEAK PAST HIM WHILE HE WENT AFTER PIETRO...
OKAY, HAWKEYE--YOU'VE HAD IT!
I SHOULD'A USED A BLAST ARROW ON YOU WHILE I HAD A CHANCE, YOU CRUMMY TURNCOAT!
I'M GONNA MAKE YOU EAT THOSE WORDS, LITTLE MAN!


SWIFTLY, WITH SCARCELY A WASTED MOTION, THE MIGHTY AVENGERS BOARD THEIR SPEEDY AERO-CAR, AND...
THAR SHE BLOWS! YOU WERE TWO SECONDS SLOW, CAP!
LIKE YOU ALWAYS USED TO SAY, HAWKEYE--MAYBE I'M JUST GETTING OLD!
WHROOM!
PARTNER, IF I EVER SAY THAT AGAIN--JUST WASH MY MOUTH OUT WITH SOAP!


THEN, THE UNBEARABLE TENSION OF THE PAST FEW HOURS ENDED, THERE IS A FLEETING MOMENT FOR A LIGHTER MOOD...
OUR RELUCTANT GUEST DOESN'T SEEM TOO HAPPY, HANK!
HE'S PROBABLY THINKING OF WHAT IT'LL BE LIKE TO SPEND SEVERAL CENTURIES IN PRISON!
WELL, IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO A MORE DESERVING GUY!
HERCULES DOTH ECHO THE WASP'S SENTIMENTS!
STILL, IT'S A PITY THE DRAGON MAN COULD NOT BE SAVED FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDY!
THOU SHALT SOON ENOW FORGET SUCH SOMBRE THOUGHTS, BEAUTEOUS WANDA...
THAT IS, IF THOU WILT DINE WITH ME THIS EVENING!

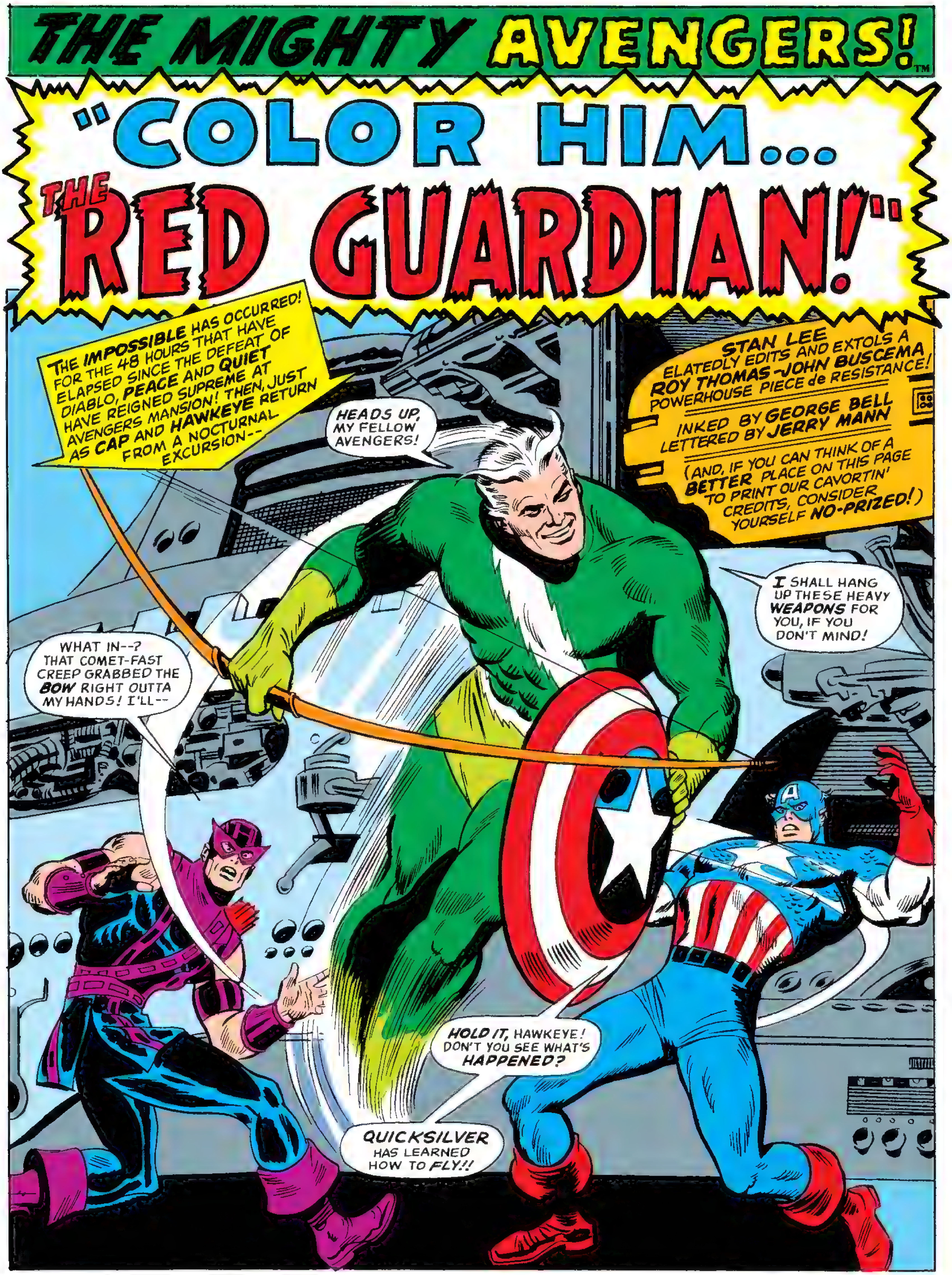

BUT, SUCH RESPITE IS EVER SHORT-LIVED--AND, SOON, AS THE AVENGERS GATHER FOR POST-MORTEMS...
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY, AVENGER? READ THAT DISPATCH AGAIN--SLOW!!
ACCORDING TO THIS, THE BLACK WIDOW IS A PRISONER--BEHIND THE BAMBOO CURTAIN!
HER CAPTORS CLAIM SHE WAS WORKING AS AN AGENT FOR... SHIELD!
IF THAT'S TRUE, WE'VE GOT TO ACT!
WE MUST RESCUE HER--SOMEHOW!

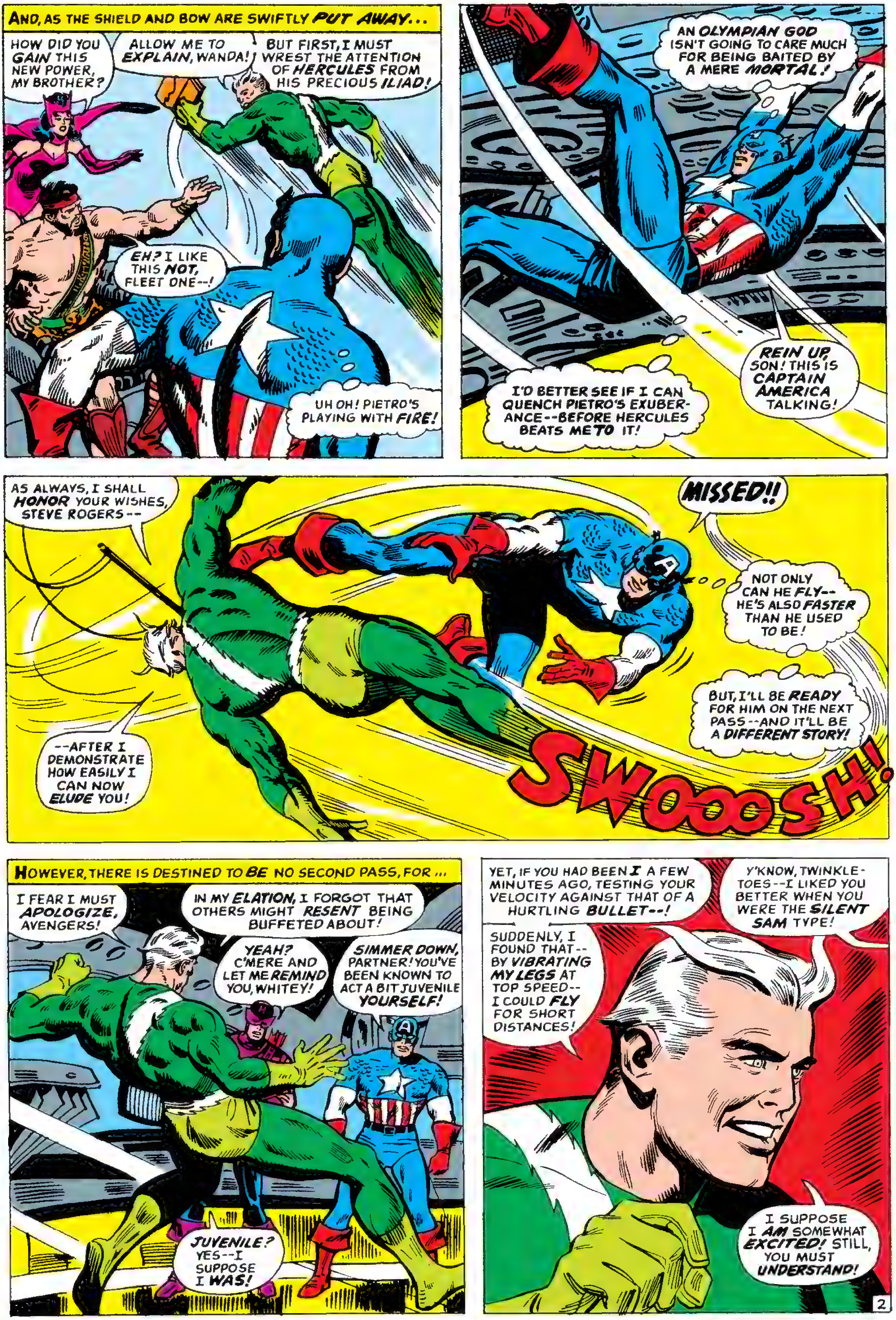

NO! I'M THE GUY WHO LOVES HER--WHO SHOULD'VE BELIEVED IN HER, NO MATTER WHAT!
SO NOW, I'M THE JOE THAT'S GOTTA GET HER OUT OF THERE--OR DIE TRYING!
AND, I'VE GOT TO DO IT--MY WAY!!
NEXT ISH:
THE MOST UNEXPECTED FOE OF ALL!!
"COLOR HIM... THE RED GUARDIAN!"

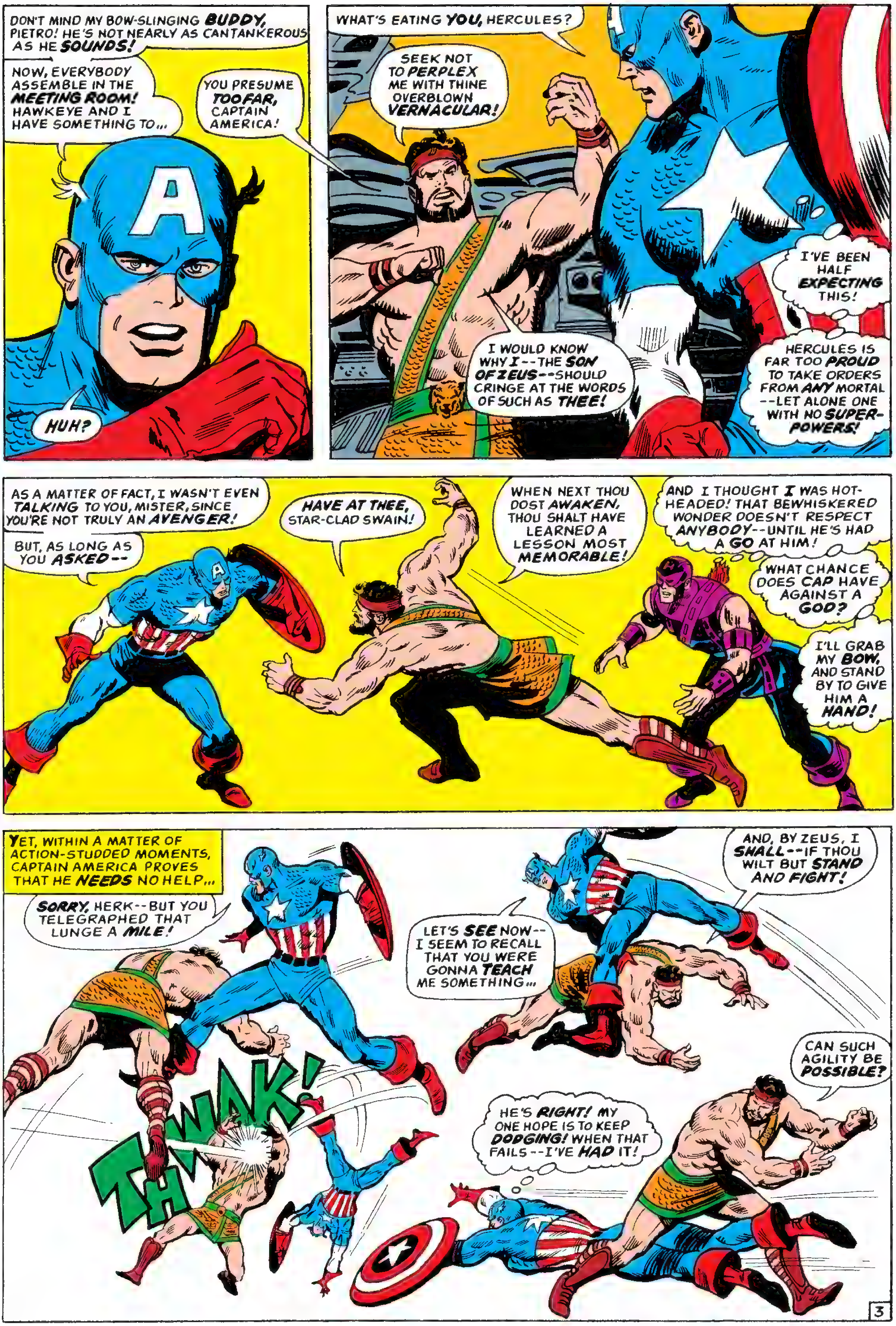
THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
43 AUG
THE RED GUARDIAN!
HERE HE IS..!
DESTINED TO BE THE MOST TALKED ABOUT SUPER-VILLAIN OF THE YEAR! (AND WAIT'LL YOU LEARN HIS STARTLING SECRET IDENTITY!)

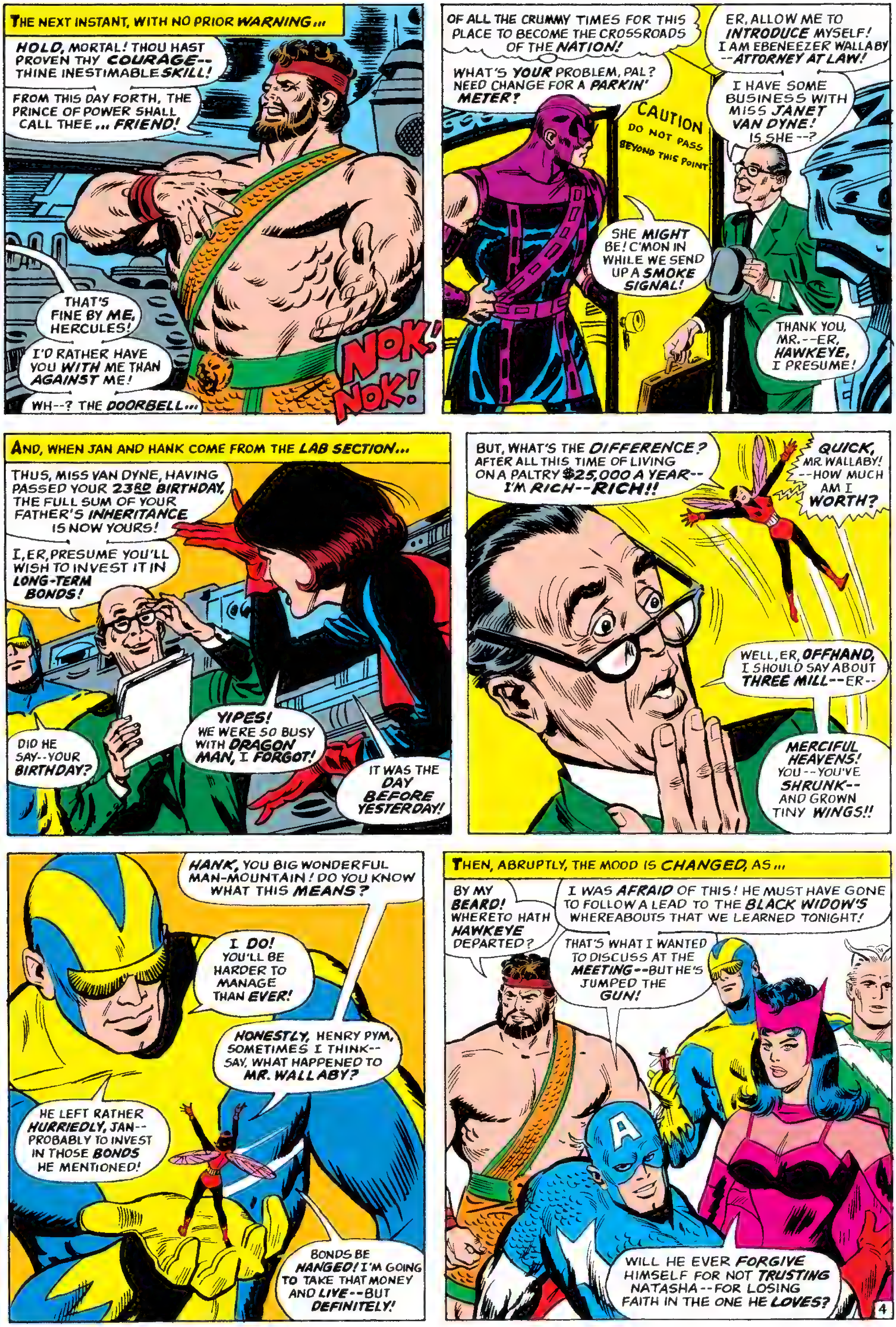
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!™

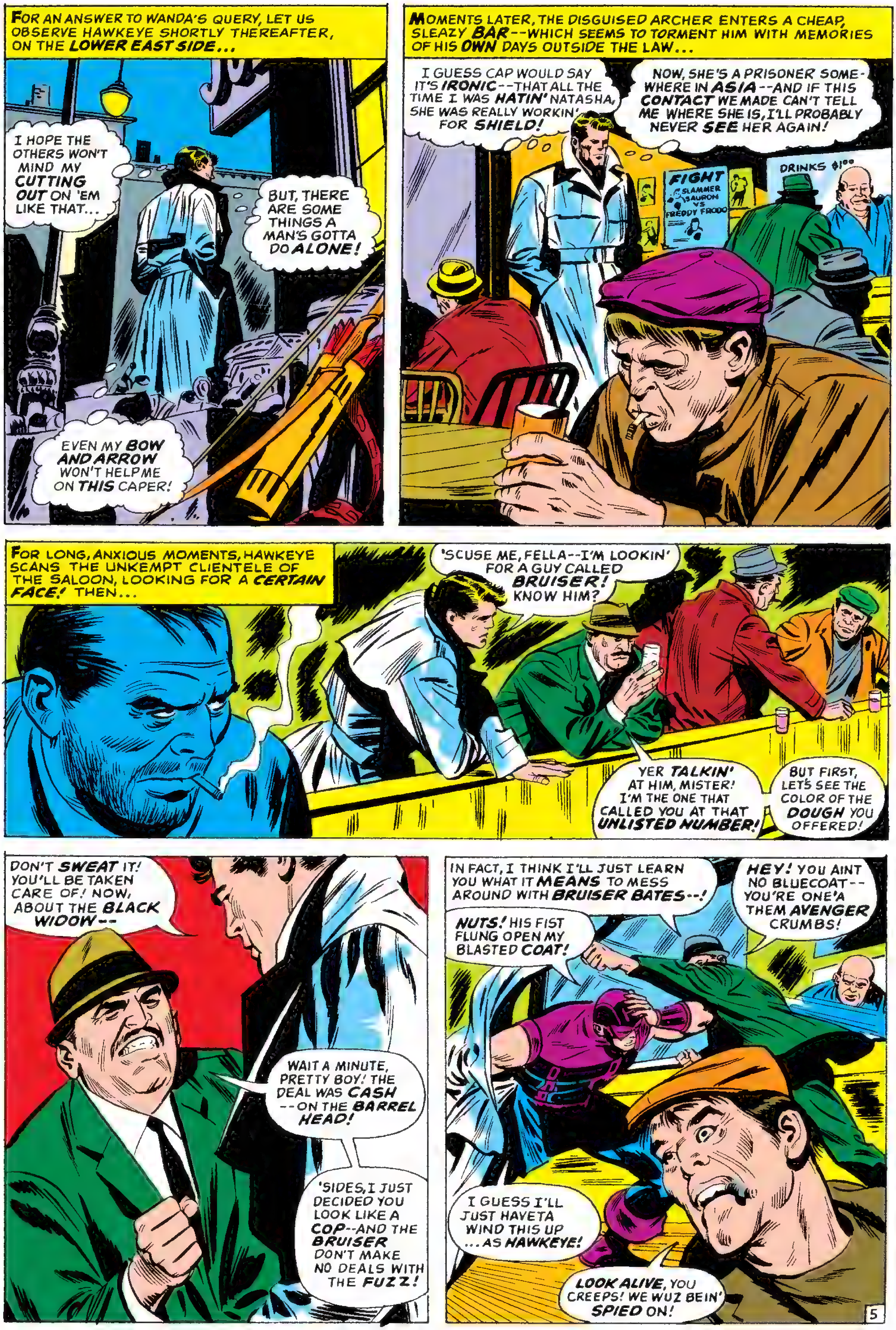
"COLOR HIM... THE RED GUARDIAN!"

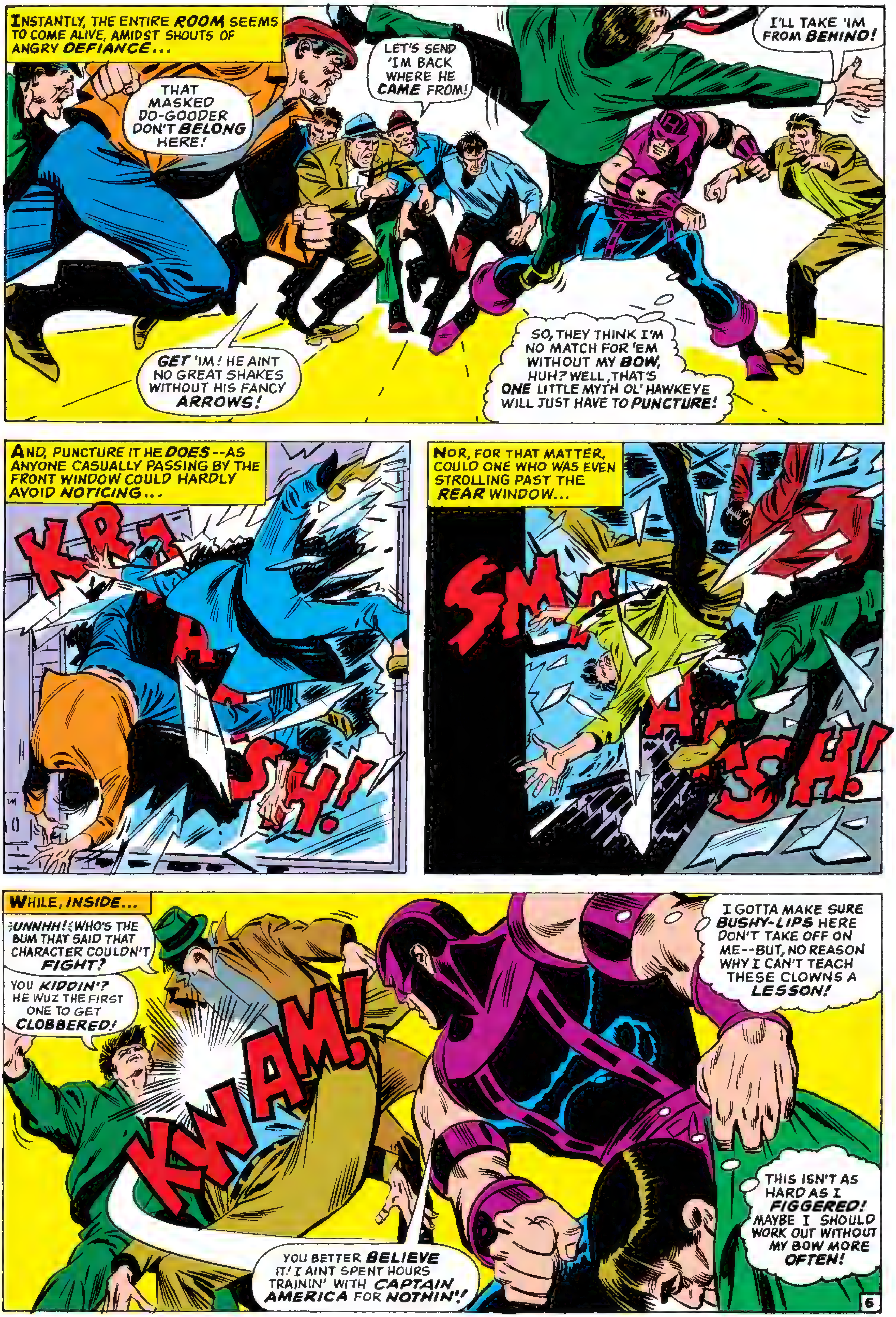

THE IMPOSSIBLE HAS OCCURRED! FOR THE 48 HOURS THAT HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE DEFEAT OF DIABLO, PEACE AND QUIET HAVE REIGNED SUPREME AT AVENGERS MANSION! THEN, JUST AS CAP AND HAWKEYE RETURN FROM A NOCTURNAL EXCURSION--
STAN LEE ELATEDLY EDITS AND EXTOLS A ROY THOMAS-JOHN BUSCEMA POWERHOUSE PIECE de RESISTANCE! INKED BY GEORGE BELL LETTERED BY JERRY MANN (AND, IF YOU CAN THINK OF A BETTER PLACE ON THIS PAGE TO PRINT OUR CAVORTIN' CREDITS, CONSIDER YOURSELF NO-PRIZED!)
HEADS UP, MY FELLOW AVENGERS!
I SHALL HANG UP THESE HEAVY WEAPONS FOR YOU, IF YOU DON'T MIND!
WHAT IN--? THAT COMET-FAST CREEP GRABBED THE BOW RIGHT OUTTA MY HANDS! I'LL--
HOLD IT, HAWKEYE! DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED?
QUICKSILVER HAS LEARNED HOW TO FLY!!

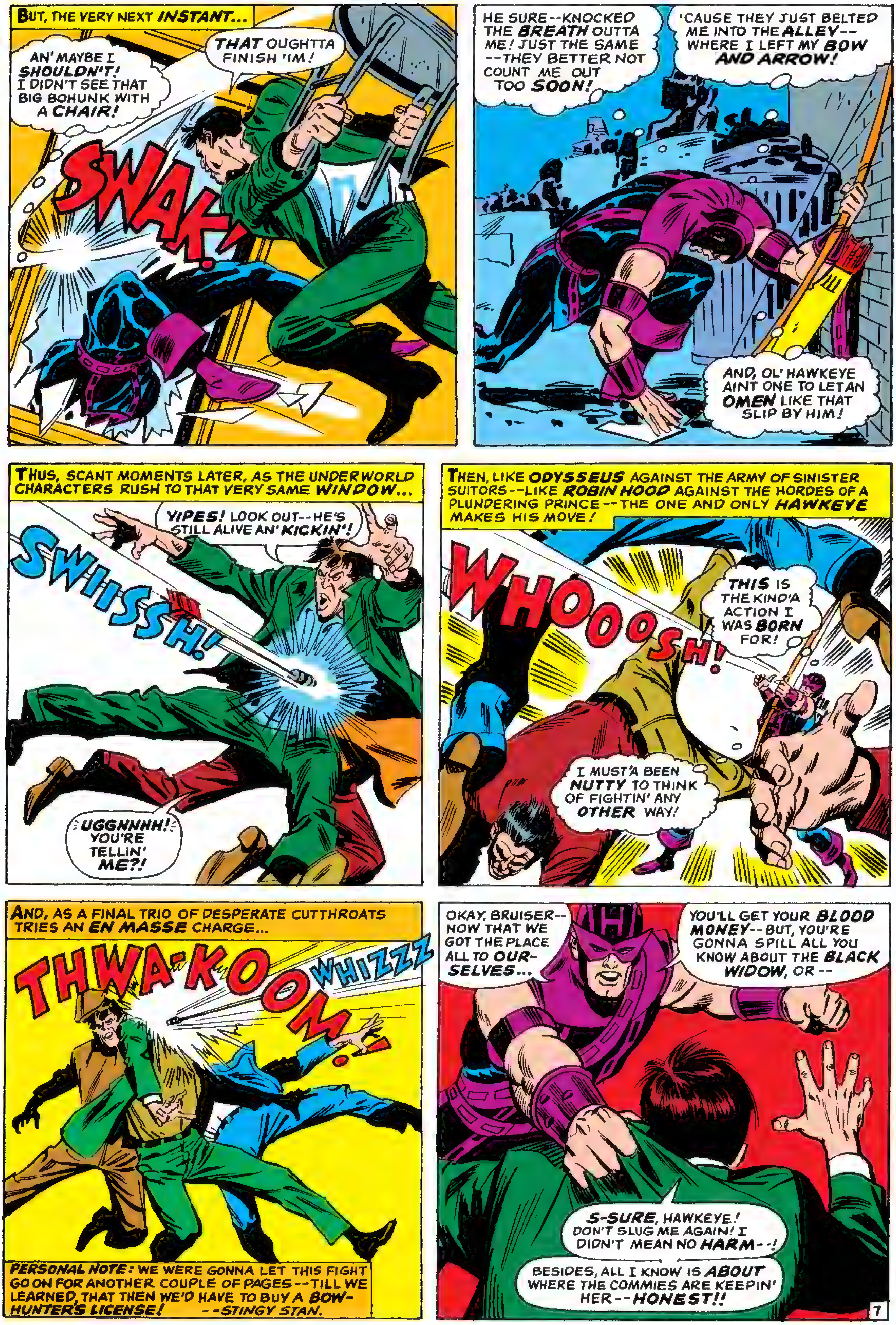

AND, AS THE SHIELD AND BOW ARE SWIFTLY **PUT AWAY...**
HOW DID YOU **GAIN** THIS NEW POWER, MY BROTHER?
ALLOW ME TO **EXPLAIN**, WANDA!
BUT FIRST, I MUST WREST THE ATTENTION OF **HERCULES** FROM HIS PRECIOUS **ILIAD!**
EH? I LIKE THIS **NOT,** FLEET ONE--!
UH OH! PIETRO'S PLAYING WITH **FIRE!**
AN **OLYMPIAN GOD** ISN'T GOING TO CARE MUCH FOR BEING BAITED BY A MERE **MORTAL!**
I'D BETTER SEE IF I CAN QUENCH PIETRO'S EXUBERANCE--**BEFORE** HERCULES BEATS **ME TO** IT!
REIN UP, SON! THIS IS **CAPTAIN AMERICA** TALKING!
AS ALWAYS, I SHALL **HONOR** YOUR WISHES, STEVE ROGERS--
MISSED!!
NOT ONLY CAN HE **FLY--** HE'S ALSO **FASTER** THAN HE USED TO BE!
BUT, I'LL BE **READY** FOR HIM ON THE NEXT PASS--AND IT'LL BE A **DIFFERENT STORY!**
--AFTER I DEMONSTRATE HOW EASILY I CAN NOW **ELUDE** YOU!
SWOOOSH!
HOWEVER, THERE IS DESTINED TO **BE** NO SECOND PASS, FOR ...
I FEAR I MUST **APOLOGIZE,** AVENGERS!
IN MY **ELATION,** I FORGOT THAT OTHERS MIGHT **RESENT** BEING BUFFETED ABOUT!
YEAH? C'MERE AND LET ME **REMIND** YOU, WHITEY!
SIMMER DOWN, PARTNER! YOU'VE BEEN KNOWN TO ACT A BIT JUVENILE **YOURSELF!**
JUVENILE? YES--I SUPPOSE I **WAS!**
YET, IF YOU HAD BEEN **I** A FEW MINUTES AGO, TESTING YOUR VELOCITY AGAINST THAT OF A HURTLING **BULLET--!**
SUDDENLY, I FOUND THAT--BY **VIBRATING MY LEGS** AT TOP SPEED--I COULD **FLY** FOR SHORT DISTANCES!
Y'KNOW, TWINKLE-TOES--I LIKED YOU BETTER WHEN YOU WERE THE **SILENT SAM** TYPE!
I SUPPOSE I **AM** SOMEWHAT **EXCITED!** STILL, YOU MUST **UNDERSTAND!**

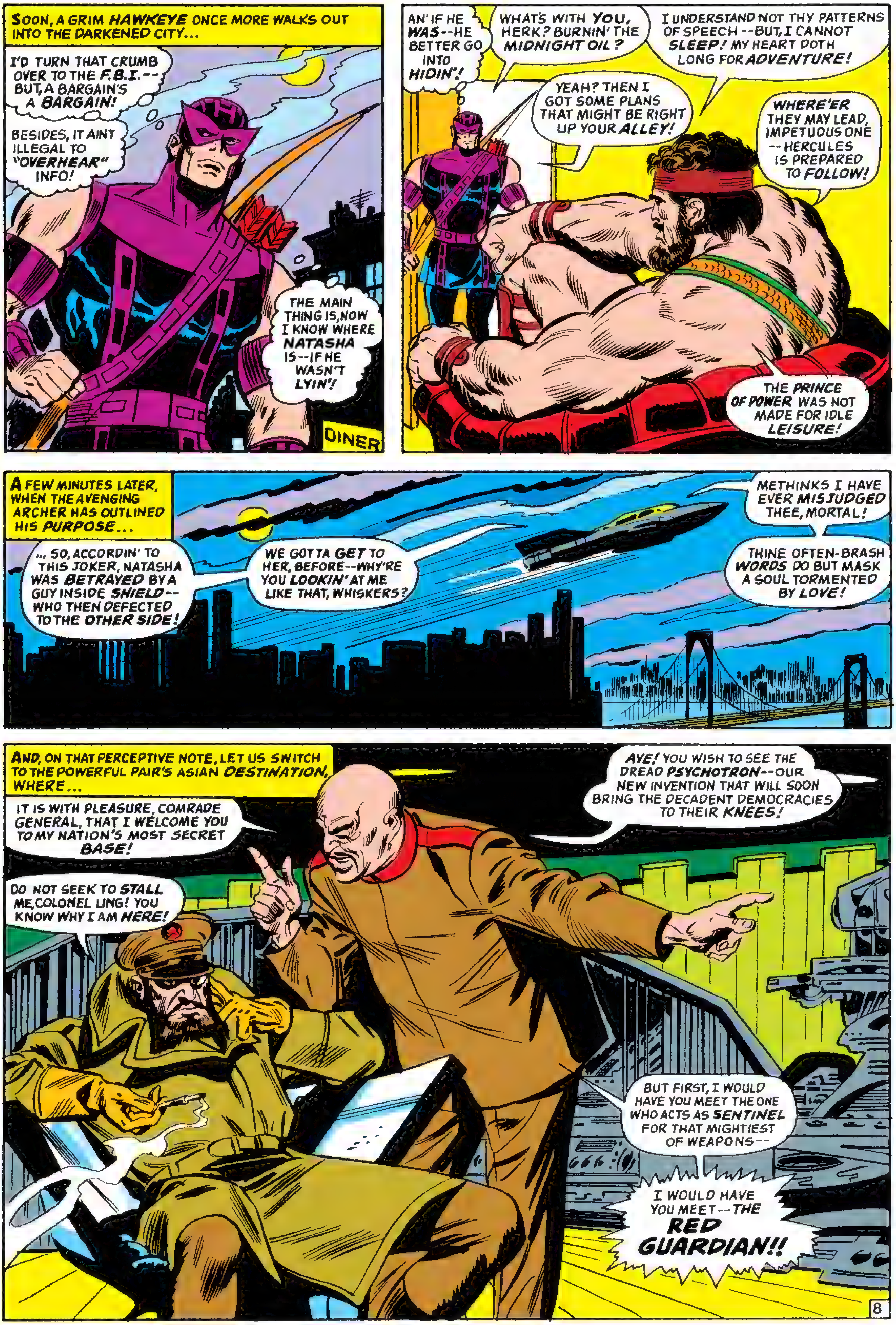

DON'T MIND MY BOW-SLINGING BUDDY, PIETRO! HE'S NOT NEARLY AS CANTANKEROUS AS HE SOUNDS!
NOW, EVERYBODY ASSEMBLE IN THE MEETING ROOM! HAWKEYE AND I HAVE SOMETHING TO...
YOU PRESUME TOO FAR, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
HUH?
WHAT'S EATING YOU, HERCULES?
SEEK NOT TO PERPLEX ME WITH THINE OVERBLOWN VERNACULAR!
I WOULD KNOW WHY I--THE SON OF ZEUS--SHOULD CRINGE AT THE WORDS OF SUCH AS THEE!
I'VE BEEN HALF EXPECTING THIS!
HERCULES IS FAR TOO PROUD TO TAKE ORDERS FROM ANY MORTAL --LET ALONE ONE WITH NO SUPER-POWERS!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WASN'T EVEN TALKING TO YOU, MISTER, SINCE YOU'RE NOT TRULY AN AVENGER!
BUT, AS LONG AS YOU ASKED--
HAVE AT THEE, STAR-CLAD SWAIN!
WHEN NEXT THOU DOST AWAKEN, THOU SHALT HAVE LEARNED A LESSON MOST MEMORABLE!
AND I THOUGHT I WAS HOT-HEADED! THAT BEWHISKERED WONDER DOESN'T RESPECT ANYBODY--UNTIL HE'S HAD A GO AT HIM!
WHAT CHANCE DOES CAP HAVE AGAINST A GOD?
I'LL GRAB MY BOW, AND STAND BY TO GIVE HIM A HAND!
YET, WITHIN A MATTER OF ACTION-STUDDED MOMENTS, CAPTAIN AMERICA PROVES THAT HE NEEDS NO HELP...
SORRY, HERK--BUT YOU TELEGRAPHED THAT LUNGE A MILE!
THWAK!
LET'S SEE NOW-- I SEEM TO RECALL THAT YOU WERE GONNA TEACH ME SOMETHING...
AND, BY ZEUS, I SHALL--IF THOU WILT BUT STAND AND FIGHT!
CAN SUCH AGILITY BE POSSIBLE?
HE'S RIGHT! MY ONE HOPE IS TO KEEP DODGING! WHEN THAT FAILS--I'VE HAD IT!

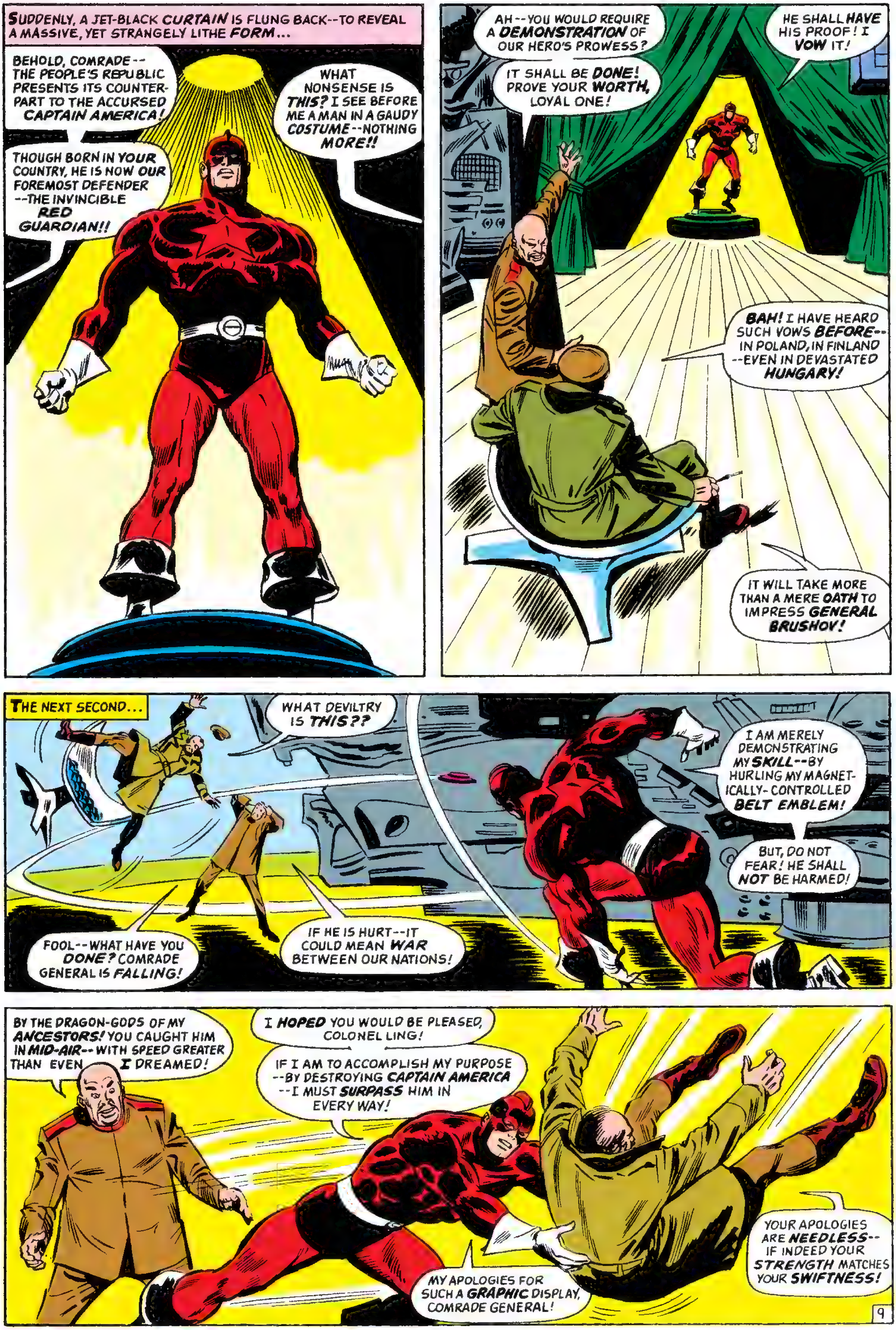

THE NEXT INSTANT, WITH NO PRIOR WARNING...
HOLD, MORTAL! THOU HAST PROVEN THY COURAGE--THINE INESTIMABLE SKILL!
FROM THIS DAY FORTH, THE PRINCE OF POWER SHALL CALL THEE... FRIEND!
THAT'S FINE BY ME, HERCULES!
I'D RATHER HAVE YOU WITH ME THAN AGAINST ME!
WH--? THE DOORBELL...
NOK! NOK!
OF ALL THE CRUMMY TIMES FOR THIS PLACE TO BECOME THE CROSSROADS OF THE NATION!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, PAL? NEED CHANGE FOR A PARKIN' METER?
ER, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! I AM EBENEEZER WALLABY --ATTORNEY AT LAW!
I HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH MISS JANET VAN DYNE! IS SHE --?
CAUTION DO NOT PASS BEYOND THIS POINT
SHE MIGHT BE! C'MON IN WHILE WE SEND UP A SMOKE SIGNAL!
THANK YOU, MR.--ER, HAWKEYE, I PRESUME!
AND, WHEN JAN AND HANK COME FROM THE LAB SECTION...
THUS, MISS VAN DYNE, HAVING PASSED YOUR 23RD BIRTHDAY, THE FULL SUM OF YOUR FATHER'S INHERITANCE IS NOW YOURS!
I, ER, PRESUME YOU'LL WISH TO INVEST IT IN LONG-TERM BONDS!
DID HE SAY--YOUR BIRTHDAY?
YIPES! WE WERE SO BUSY WITH DRAGON MAN, I FORGOT!
IT WAS THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY!
BUT, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? AFTER ALL THIS TIME OF LIVING ON A PALTRY $25,000 A YEAR--I'M RICH--RICH!!
QUICK, MR. WALLABY! --HOW MUCH AM I WORTH?
WELL, ER, OFFHAND, I SHOULD SAY ABOUT THREE MILL--ER--
MERCIFUL HEAVENS! YOU--YOU'VE SHRUNK--AND GROWN TINY WINGS!!
HANK, YOU BIG WONDERFUL MAN-MOUNTAIN! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?
I DO! YOU'LL BE HARDER TO MANAGE THAN EVER!
HONESTLY, HENRY PYM, SOMETIMES I THINK--SAY, WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. WALLABY?
HE LEFT RATHER HURRIEDLY, JAN--PROBABLY TO INVEST IN THOSE BONDS HE MENTIONED!
BONDS BE HANGED! I'M GOING TO TAKE THAT MONEY AND LIVE--BUT DEFINITELY!
THEN, ABRUPTLY, THE MOOD IS CHANGED, AS...
BY MY BEARD! WHERETO HATH HAWKEYE DEPARTED?
I WAS AFRAID OF THIS! HE MUST HAVE GONE TO FOLLOW A LEAD TO THE BLACK WIDOW'S WHEREABOUTS THAT WE LEARNED TONIGHT!
THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO DISCUSS AT THE MEETING--BUT HE'S JUMPED THE GUN!
WILL HE EVER FORGIVE HIMSELF FOR NOT TRUSTING NATASHA--FOR LOSING FAITH IN THE ONE HE LOVES?

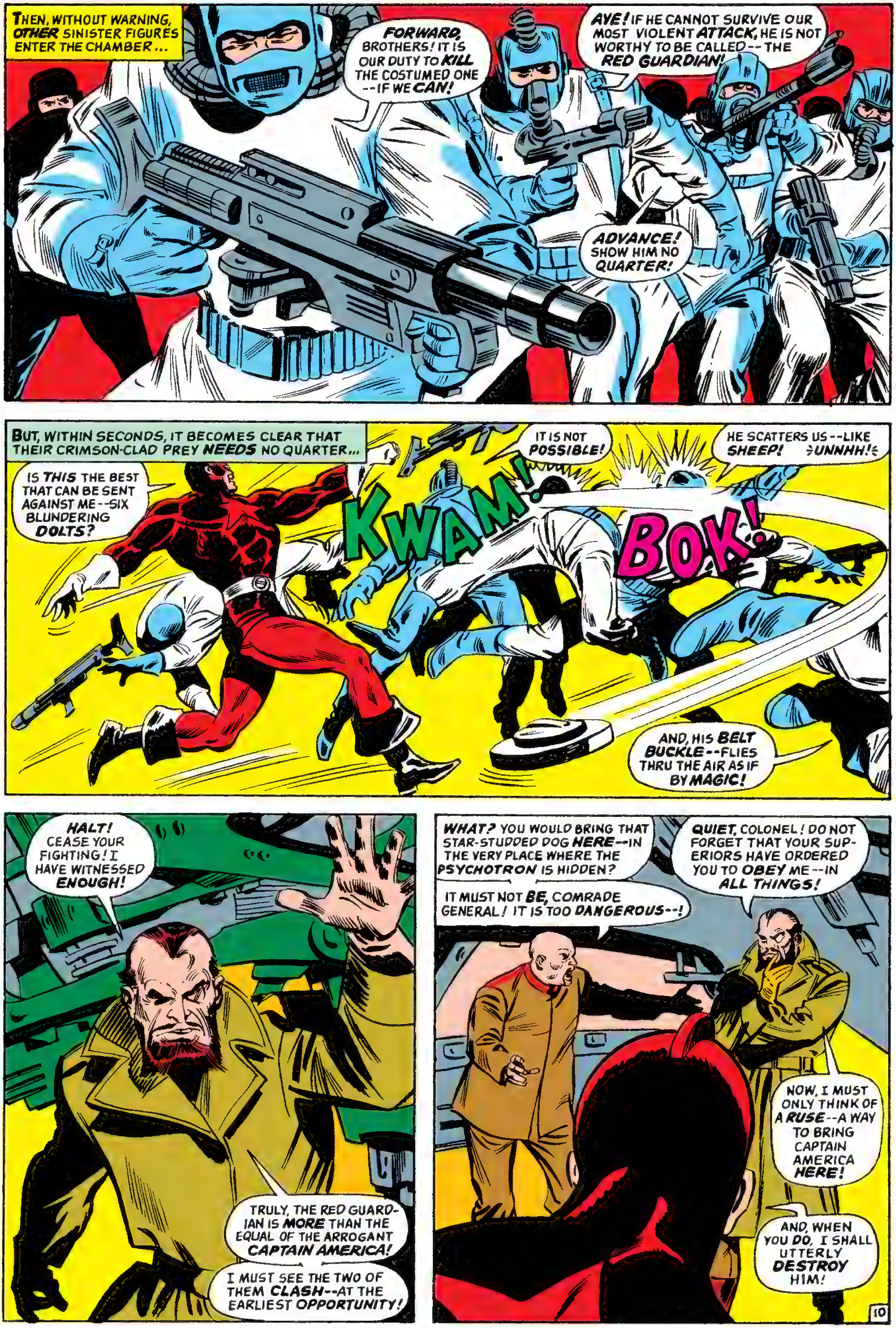

FOR AN ANSWER TO WANDA'S QUERY, LET US OBSERVE HAWKEYE SHORTLY THEREAFTER, ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE...
I HOPE THE OTHERS WON'T MIND MY CUTTING OUT ON 'EM LIKE THAT...
BUT, THERE ARE SOME THINGS A MAN'S GOTTA DO ALONE!
EVEN MY BOW AND ARROW WON'T HELP ME ON THIS CAPER!
MOMENTS LATER, THE DISGUISED ARCHER ENTERS A CHEAP, SLEAZY BAR--WHICH SEEMS TO TORMENT HIM WITH MEMORIES OF HIS OWN DAYS OUTSIDE THE LAW...
I GUESS CAP WOULD SAY IT'S IRONIC--THAT ALL THE TIME I WAS HATIN' NATASHA, SHE WAS REALLY WORKIN' FOR SHIELD!
NOW, SHE'S A PRISONER SOMEWHERE IN ASIA--AND IF THIS CONTACT WE MADE CAN'T TELL ME WHERE SHE IS, I'LL PROBABLY NEVER SEE HER AGAIN!
DRINKS $1.00
FIGHT SLAMMER SAURON VS FREDDY FRODO
FOR LONG, ANXIOUS MOMENTS, HAWKEYE SCANS THE UNKEMPT CLIENTELE OF THE SALOON, LOOKING FOR A CERTAIN FACE! THEN...
'SCUSE ME, FELLA--I'M LOOKIN' FOR A GUY CALLED BRUISER! KNOW HIM?
YER TALKIN' AT HIM, MISTER! I'M THE ONE THAT CALLED YOU AT THAT UNLISTED NUMBER!
BUT FIRST, LET'S SEE THE COLOR OF THE DOUGH YOU OFFERED!
DON'T SWEAT IT! YOU'LL BE TAKEN CARE OF! NOW, ABOUT THE BLACK WIDOW--
WAIT A MINUTE, PRETTY BOY! THE DEAL WAS CASH--ON THE BARREL HEAD!
'SIDES, I JUST DECIDED YOU LOOK LIKE A COP--AND THE BRUISER DON'T MAKE NO DEALS WITH THE FUZZ!
IN FACT, I THINK I'LL JUST LEARN YOU WHAT IT MEANS TO MESS AROUND WITH BRUISER BATES--!
HEY! YOU AINT NO BLUECOAT--YOU'RE ONE'A THEM AVENGER CRUMBS!
NUTS! HIS FIST FLUNG OPEN MY BLASTED COAT!
I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVETA WIND THIS UP ...AS HAWKEYE!
LOOK ALIVE, YOU CREEPS! WE WUZ BEIN' SPIED ON!


INSTANTLY, THE ENTIRE ROOM SEEMS TO COME ALIVE, AMIDST SHOUTS OF ANGRY DEFIANCE...
THAT MASKED DO-GOODER DON'T BELONG HERE!
LET'S SEND 'IM BACK WHERE HE CAME FROM!
I'LL TAKE 'IM FROM BEHIND!
GET 'IM! HE AINT NO GREAT SHAKES WITHOUT HIS FANCY ARROWS!
SO, THEY THINK I'M NO MATCH FOR 'EM WITHOUT MY BOW, HUH? WELL, THAT'S ONE LITTLE MYTH OL' HAWKEYE WILL JUST HAVE TO PUNCTURE!
AND, PUNCTURE IT HE DOES--AS ANYONE CASUALLY PASSING BY THE FRONT WINDOW COULD HARDLY AVOID NOTICING...
KRASH!
NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, COULD ONE WHO WAS EVEN STROLLING PAST THE REAR WINDOW...
SMASH!
WHILE, INSIDE...
UNNHH! WHO'S THE BUM THAT SAID THAT CHARACTER COULDN'T FIGHT?
YOU KIDDIN'? HE WUZ THE FIRST ONE TO GET CLOBBERED!
KWAM!
I GOTTA MAKE SURE BUSHY-LIPS HERE DON'T TAKE OFF ON ME--BUT, NO REASON WHY I CAN'T TEACH THESE CLOWNS A LESSON!
THIS ISN'T AS HARD AS I FIGGERED! MAYBE I SHOULD WORK OUT WITHOUT MY BOW MORE OFTEN!
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT! I AINT SPENT HOURS TRAININ' WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA FOR NOTHIN'!


BUT, THE VERY NEXT INSTANT...
AN' MAYBE I SHOULDN'T! I DIDN'T SEE THAT BIG BOHUNK WITH A CHAIR!
THAT OUGHTTA FINISH 'IM!
SWAK!
HE SURE--KNOCKED THE BREATH OUTTA ME! JUST THE SAME --THEY BETTER NOT COUNT ME OUT TOO SOON!
'CAUSE THEY JUST BELTED ME INTO THE ALLEY-- WHERE I LEFT MY BOW AND ARROW!
AND, OL' HAWKEYE AINT ONE TO LET AN OMEN LIKE THAT SLIP BY HIM!
THUS, SCANT MOMENTS LATER, AS THE UNDERWORLD CHARACTERS RUSH TO THAT VERY SAME WINDOW...
YIPES! LOOK OUT--HE'S STILL ALIVE AN' KICKIN'!
SWIISSH!
UGGNNNH! YOU'RE TELLIN' ME?!
THEN, LIKE ODYSSEUS AGAINST THE ARMY OF SINISTER SUITORS--LIKE ROBIN HOOD AGAINST THE HORDES OF A PLUNDERING PRINCE--THE ONE AND ONLY HAWKEYE MAKES HIS MOVE!
WHOOOOSH!
THIS IS THE KIND'A ACTION I WAS BORN FOR!
I MUST'A BEEN NUTTY TO THINK OF FIGHTIN' ANY OTHER WAY!
AND, AS A FINAL TRIO OF DESPERATE CUTTHROATS TRIES AN EN MASSE CHARGE...
THWA-KOOM!
WHIZZZ
PERSONAL NOTE: WE WERE GONNA LET THIS FIGHT GO ON FOR ANOTHER COUPLE OF PAGES--TILL WE LEARNED THAT THEN WE'D HAVE TO BUY A BOW-HUNTER'S LICENSE! --STINGY STAN.
OKAY, BRUISER-- NOW THAT WE GOT THE PLACE ALL TO OUR-SELVES...
YOU'LL GET YOUR BLOOD MONEY--BUT, YOU'RE GONNA SPILL ALL YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BLACK WIDOW, OR --
S-SURE, HAWKEYE! DON'T SLUG ME AGAIN! I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM--!
BESIDES, ALL I KNOW IS ABOUT WHERE THE COMMIES ARE KEEPIN' HER--HONEST!!


SOON, A GRIM HAWKEYE ONCE MORE WALKS OUT INTO THE DARKENED CITY...
I'D TURN THAT CRUMB OVER TO THE F.B.I.-- BUT, A BARGAIN'S A BARGAIN!
BESIDES, IT AINT ILLEGAL TO "OVERHEAR" INFO!
THE MAIN THING IS, NOW I KNOW WHERE NATASHA IS--IF HE WASN'T LYIN'!
DINER
AN' IF HE WAS--HE BETTER GO INTO HIDIN'!
WHAT'S WITH YOU, HERK? BURNIN' THE MIDNIGHT OIL?
I UNDERSTAND NOT THY PATTERNS OF SPEECH--BUT, I CANNOT SLEEP! MY HEART DOTH LONG FOR ADVENTURE!
YEAH? THEN I GOT SOME PLANS THAT MIGHT BE RIGHT UP YOUR ALLEY!
WHERE'ER THEY MAY LEAD, IMPETUOUS ONE --HERCULES IS PREPARED TO FOLLOW!
THE PRINCE OF POWER WAS NOT MADE FOR IDLE LEISURE!
A FEW MINUTES LATER, WHEN THE AVENGING ARCHER HAS OUTLINED HIS PURPOSE...
...SO, ACCORDIN' TO THIS JOKER, NATASHA WAS BETRAYED BY A GUY INSIDE SHIELD-- WHO THEN DEFECTED TO THE OTHER SIDE!
WE GOTTA GET TO HER, BEFORE--WHY'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT ME LIKE THAT, WHISKERS?
METHINKS I HAVE EVER MISJUDGED THEE, MORTAL!
THINE OFTEN-BRASH WORDS DO BUT MASK A SOUL TORMENTED BY LOVE!
AND, ON THAT PERCEPTIVE NOTE, LET US SWITCH TO THE POWERFUL PAIR'S ASIAN DESTINATION, WHERE...
IT IS WITH PLEASURE, COMRADE GENERAL, THAT I WELCOME YOU TO MY NATION'S MOST SECRET BASE!
DO NOT SEEK TO STALL ME, COLONEL LING! YOU KNOW WHY I AM HERE!
AYE! YOU WISH TO SEE THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON--OUR NEW INVENTION THAT WILL SOON BRING THE DECADENT DEMOCRACIES TO THEIR KNEES!
BUT FIRST, I WOULD HAVE YOU MEET THE ONE WHO ACTS AS SENTINEL FOR THAT MIGHTIEST OF WEAPONS--
I WOULD HAVE YOU MEET--THE RED GUARDIAN!!


SUDDENLY, A JET-BLACK CURTAIN IS FLUNG BACK--TO REVEAL A MASSIVE, YET STRANGELY LITHE FORM...
BEHOLD, COMRADE-- THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC PRESENTS ITS COUNTERPART TO THE ACCURSED CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THOUGH BORN IN YOUR COUNTRY, HE IS NOW OUR FOREMOST DEFENDER --THE INVINCIBLE RED GUARDIAN!!
WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS? I SEE BEFORE ME A MAN IN A GAUDY COSTUME--NOTHING MORE!!
AH--YOU WOULD REQUIRE A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR HERO'S PROWESS?
IT SHALL BE DONE! PROVE YOUR WORTH, LOYAL ONE!
HE SHALL HAVE HIS PROOF! I VOW IT!
BAH! I HAVE HEARD SUCH VOWS BEFORE-- IN POLAND, IN FINLAND --EVEN IN DEVASTATED HUNGARY!
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A MERE OATH TO IMPRESS GENERAL BRUSHOV!
THE NEXT SECOND...
WHAT DEVILTRY IS THIS??
I AM MERELY DEMONSTRATING MY SKILL--BY HURLING MY MAGNETICALLY-CONTROLLED BELT EMBLEM!
BUT, DO NOT FEAR! HE SHALL NOT BE HARMED!
FOOL--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? COMRADE GENERAL IS FALLING!
IF HE IS HURT--IT COULD MEAN WAR BETWEEN OUR NATIONS!
BY THE DRAGON-GODS OF MY ANCESTORS! YOU CAUGHT HIM IN MID-AIR--WITH SPEED GREATER THAN EVEN I DREAMED!
I HOPED YOU WOULD BE PLEASED, COLONEL LING!
IF I AM TO ACCOMPLISH MY PURPOSE --BY DESTROYING CAPTAIN AMERICA --I MUST SURPASS HIM IN EVERY WAY!
MY APOLOGIES FOR SUCH A GRAPHIC DISPLAY, COMRADE GENERAL!
YOUR APOLOGIES ARE NEEDLESS-- IF INDEED YOUR STRENGTH MATCHES YOUR SWIFTNESS!


THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, OTHER SINISTER FIGURES ENTER THE CHAMBER...
FORWARD, BROTHERS! IT IS OUR DUTY TO KILL THE COSTUMED ONE --IF WE CAN!
AYE! IF HE CANNOT SURVIVE OUR MOST VIOLENT ATTACK, HE IS NOT WORTHY TO BE CALLED-- THE RED GUARDIAN!
ADVANCE! SHOW HIM NO QUARTER!
BUT, WITHIN SECONDS, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT THEIR CRIMSON-CLAD PREY NEEDS NO QUARTER...
IS THIS THE BEST THAT CAN BE SENT AGAINST ME--SIX BLUNDERING DOLTS?
KWAM!
IT IS NOT POSSIBLE!
BOK!
HE SCATTERS US--LIKE SHEEP! UNNHH!
AND, HIS BELT BUCKLE--FLIES THRU THE AIR AS IF BY MAGIC!
HALT! CEASE YOUR FIGHTING! I HAVE WITNESSED ENOUGH!
TRULY, THE RED GUARDIAN IS MORE THAN THE EQUAL OF THE ARROGANT CAPTAIN AMERICA!
I MUST SEE THE TWO OF THEM CLASH--AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY!
WHAT? YOU WOULD BRING THAT STAR-STUDDED DOG HERE--IN THE VERY PLACE WHERE THE PSYCHOTRON IS HIDDEN?
IT MUST NOT BE, COMRADE GENERAL! IT IS TOO DANGEROUS--!
QUIET, COLONEL! DO NOT FORGET THAT YOUR SUPERIORS HAVE ORDERED YOU TO OBEY ME--IN ALL THINGS!
NOW, I MUST ONLY THINK OF A RUSE--A WAY TO BRING CAPTAIN AMERICA HERE!
AND, WHEN YOU DO, I SHALL UTTERLY DESTROY HIM!
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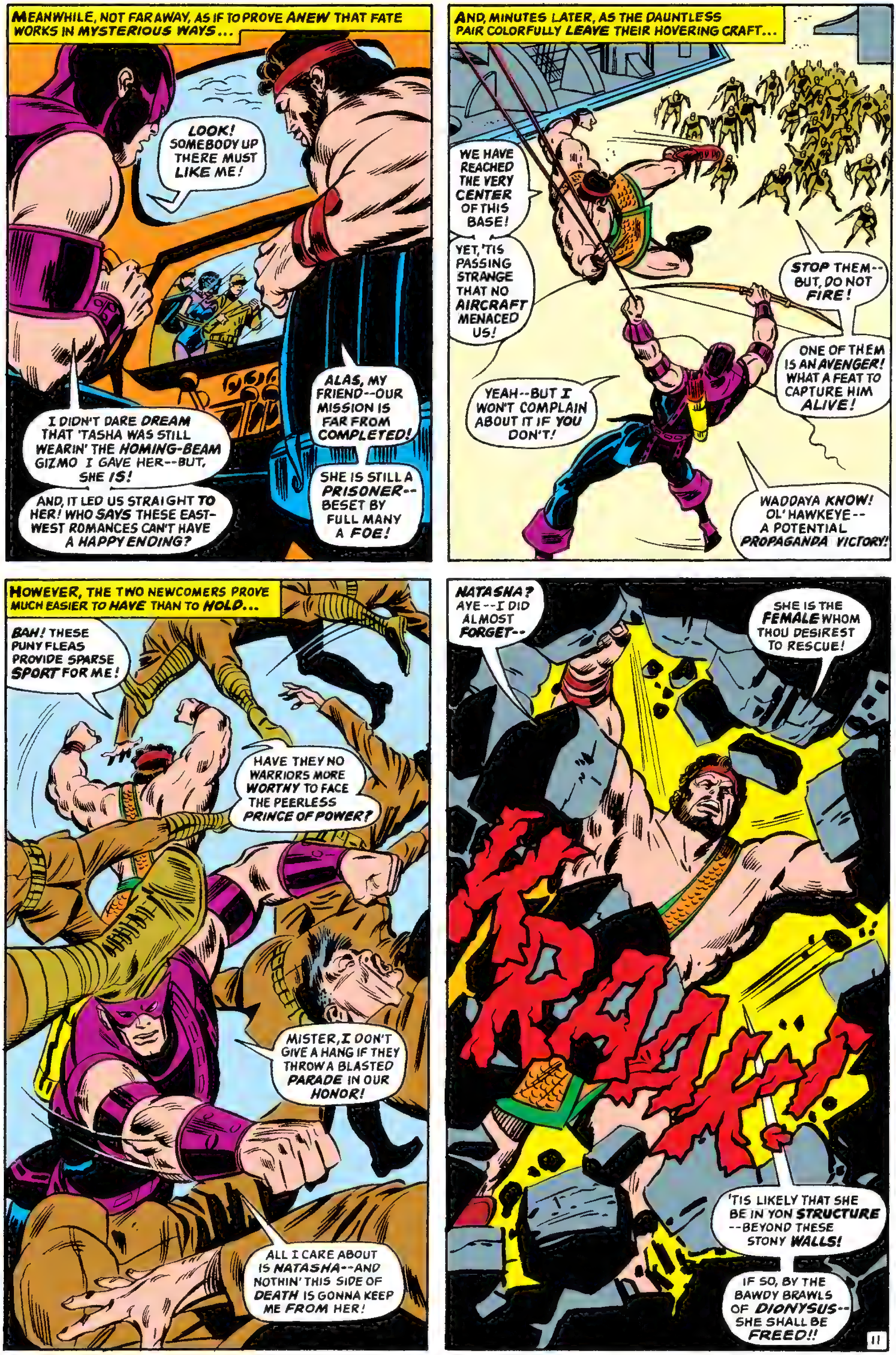
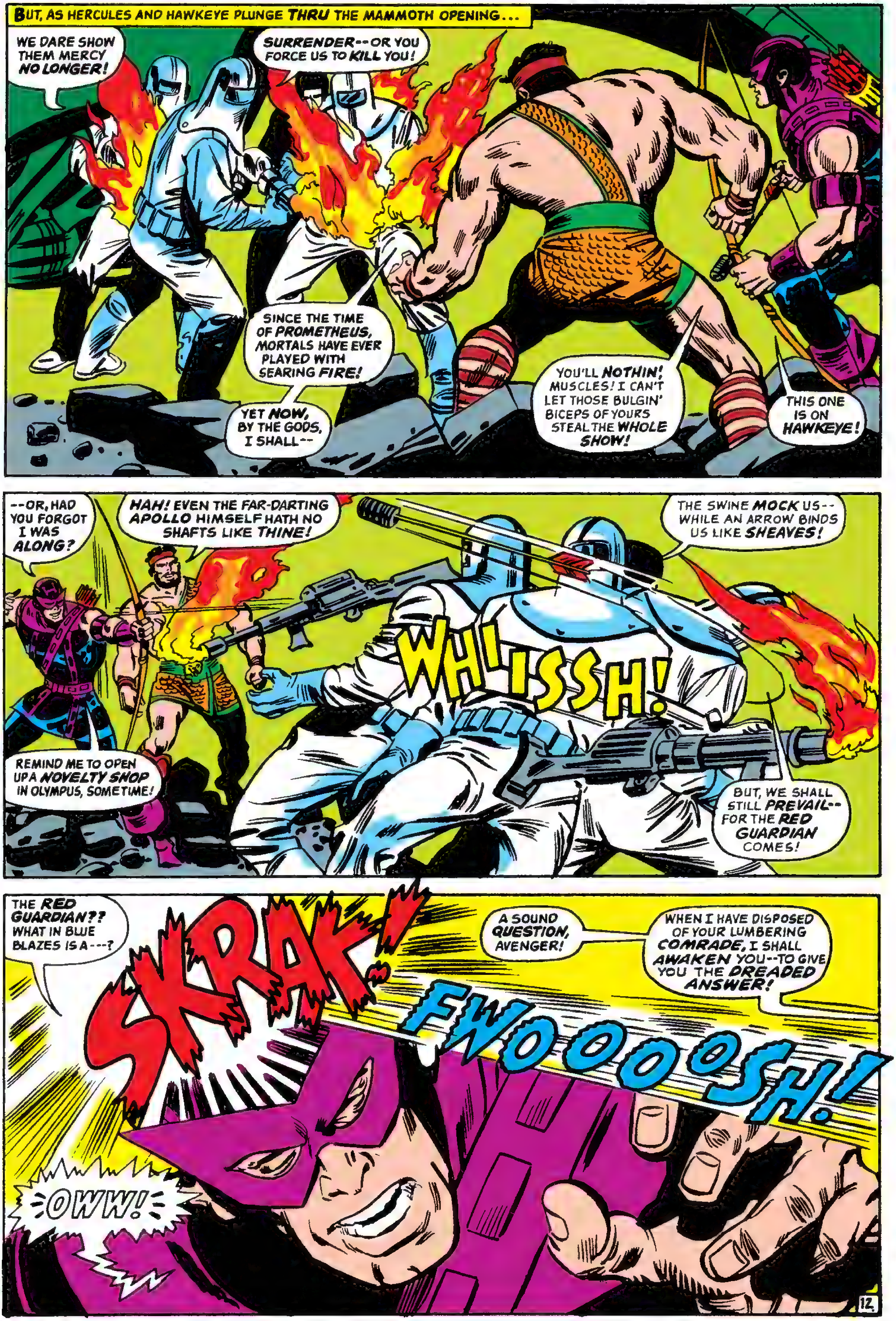
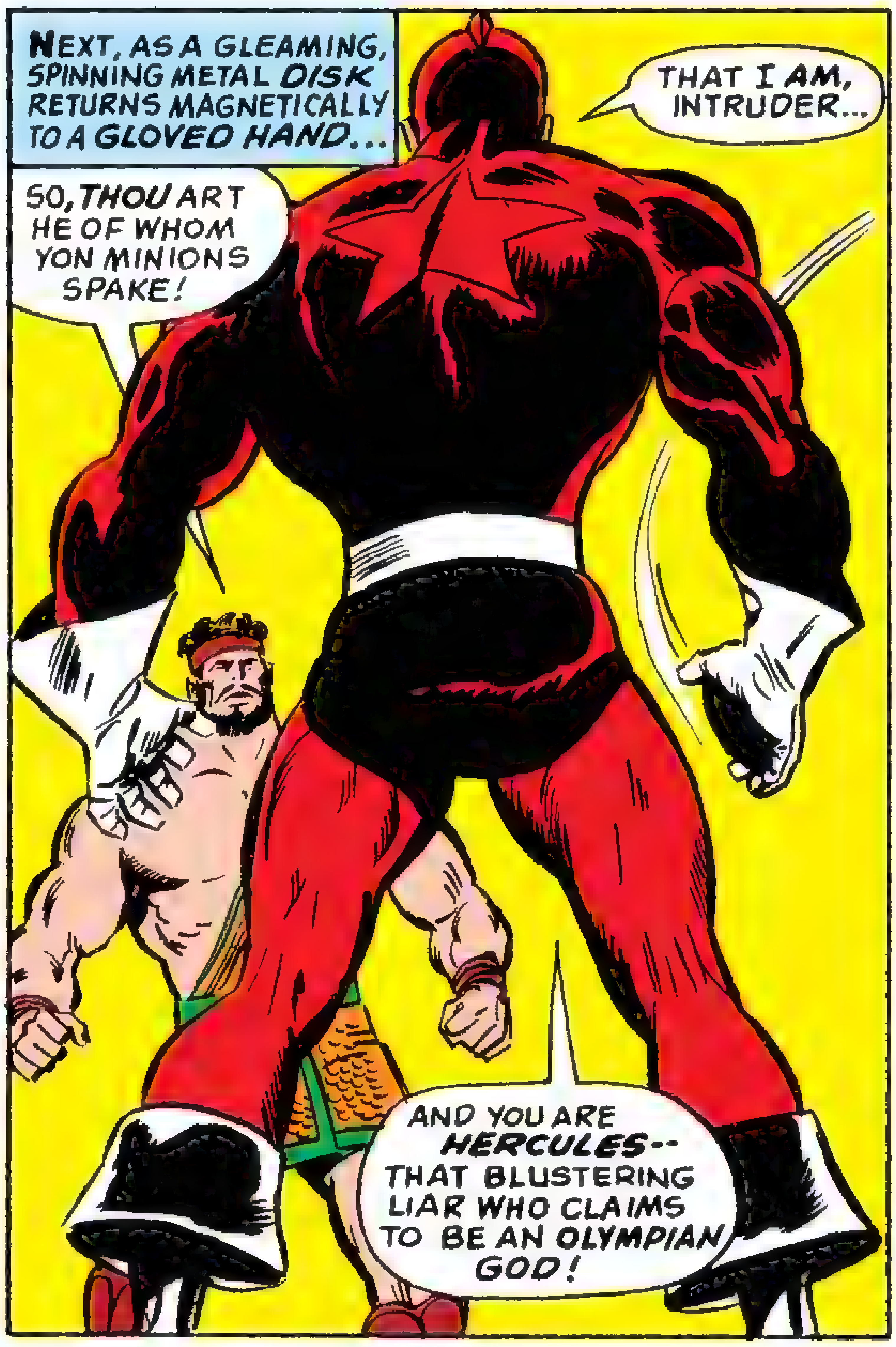
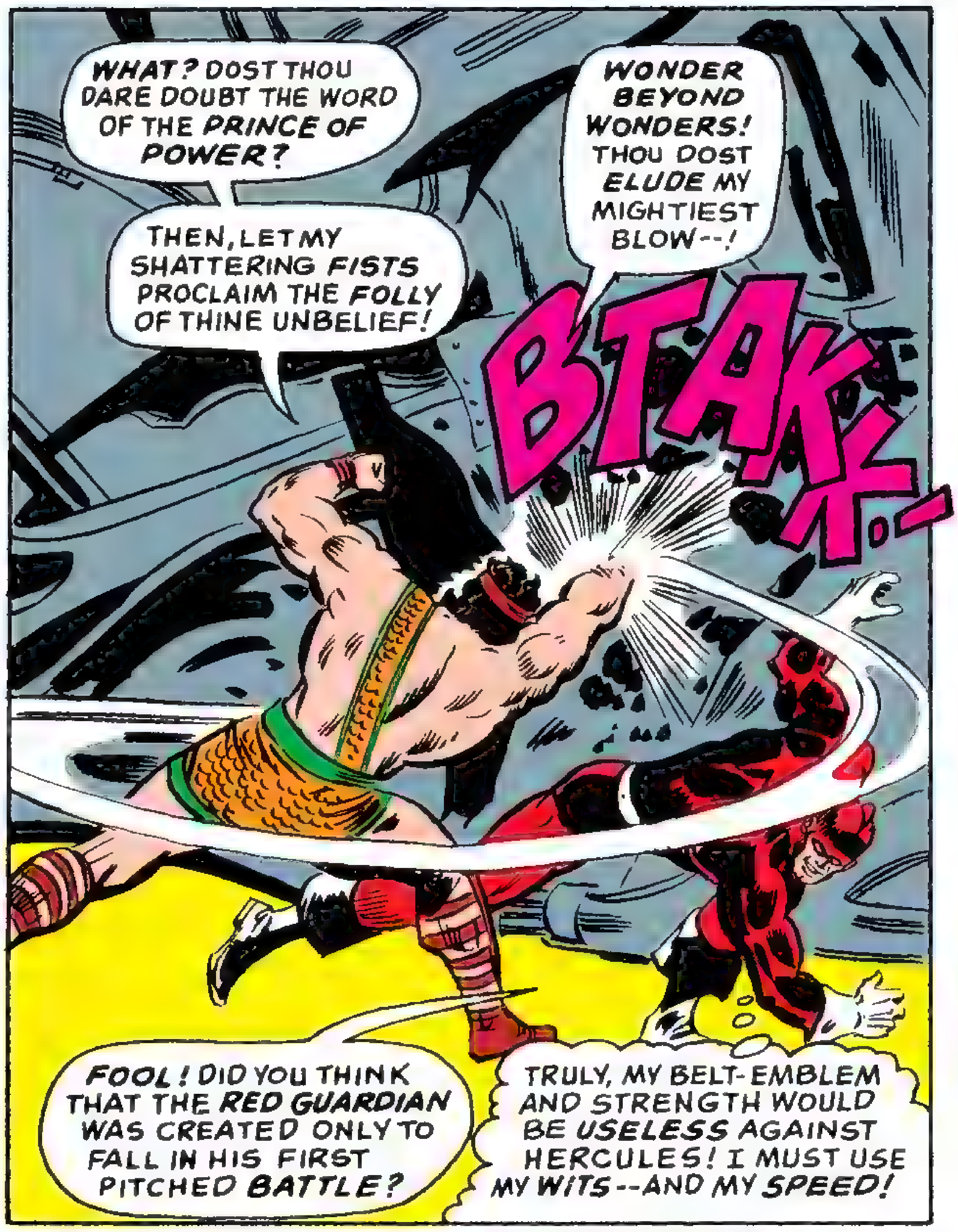
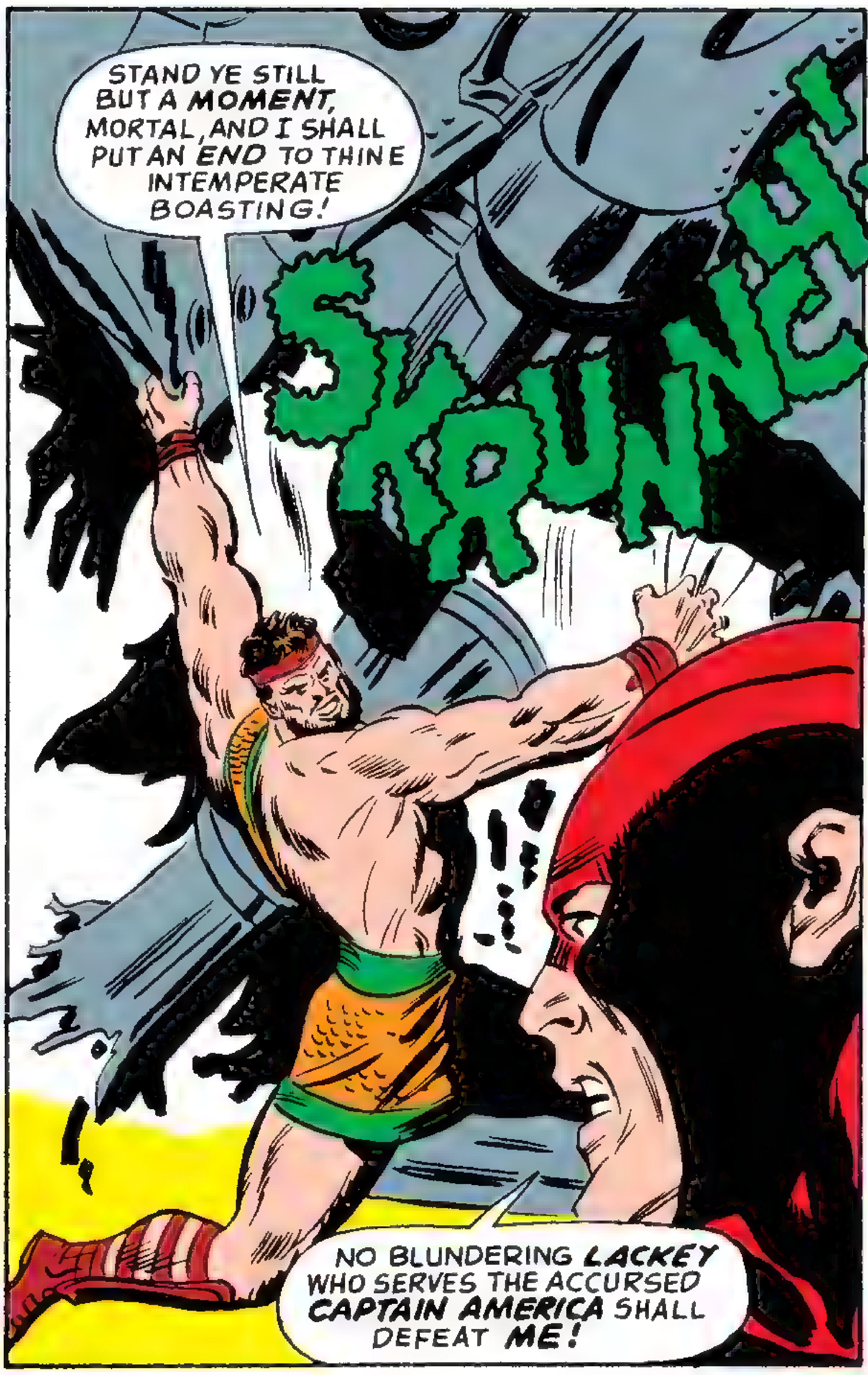
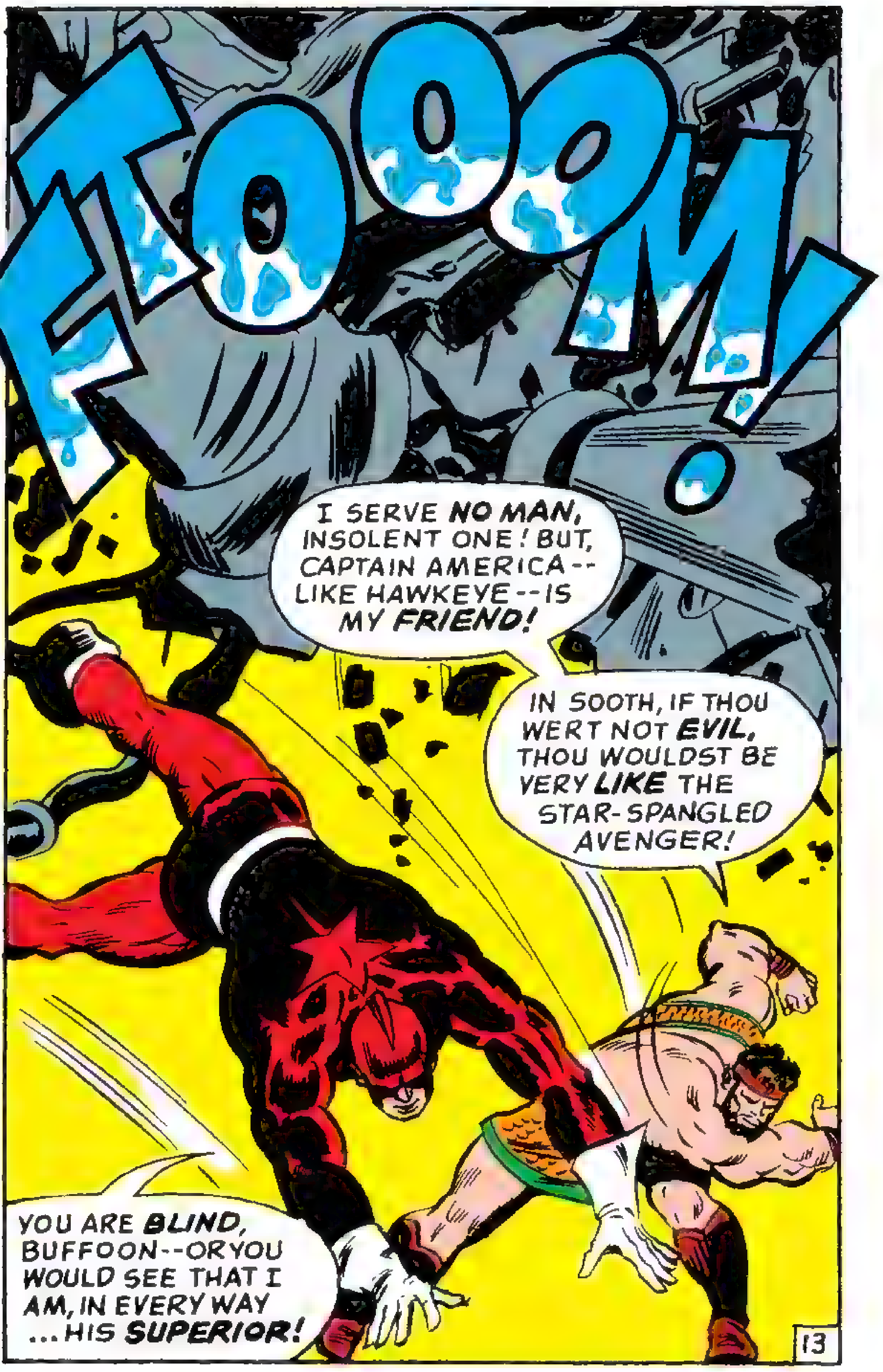

MEANWHILE, NOT FAR AWAY, AS IF TO PROVE ANEW THAT FATE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS...
LOOK! SOMEBODY UP THERE MUST LIKE ME!
I DIDN'T DARE DREAM THAT 'TASHA WAS STILL WEARIN' THE HOMING-BEAM GIZMO I GAVE HER--BUT, SHE IS!
AND, IT LED US STRAIGHT TO HER! WHO SAYS THESE EAST-WEST ROMANCES CAN'T HAVE A HAPPY ENDING?
ALAS, MY FRIEND--OUR MISSION IS FAR FROM COMPLETED!
SHE IS STILL A PRISONER--BESET BY FULL MANY A FOE!
AND, MINUTES LATER, AS THE DAUNTLESS PAIR COLORFULLY LEAVE THEIR HOVERING CRAFT...
WE HAVE REACHED THE VERY CENTER OF THIS BASE!
YET, 'TIS PASSING STRANGE THAT NO AIRCRAFT MENACED US!
YEAH--BUT I WON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT IT IF YOU DON'T!
STOP THEM--BUT, DO NOT FIRE!
ONE OF THEM IS AN AVENGER! WHAT A FEAT TO CAPTURE HIM ALIVE!
WADDAYA KNOW! OL' HAWKEYE--A POTENTIAL PROPAGANDA VICTORY!
HOWEVER, THE TWO NEWCOMERS PROVE MUCH EASIER TO HAVE THAN TO HOLD...
BAH! THESE PUNY FLEAS PROVIDE SPARSE SPORT FOR ME!
HAVE THEY NO WARRIORS MORE WORTHY TO FACE THE PEERLESS PRINCE OF POWER?
MISTER, I DON'T GIVE A HANG IF THEY THROW A BLASTED PARADE IN OUR HONOR!
ALL I CARE ABOUT IS NATASHA--AND NOTHIN' THIS SIDE OF DEATH IS GONNA KEEP ME FROM HER!
NATASHA? AYE--I DID ALMOST FORGET--
SHE IS THE FEMALE WHOM THOU DESIREST TO RESCUE!
KRAAK!!
'TIS LIKELY THAT SHE BE IN YON STRUCTURE--BEYOND THESE STONY WALLS!
IF SO, BY THE BAWDY BRAWLS OF DIONYSUS--SHE SHALL BE FREED!!

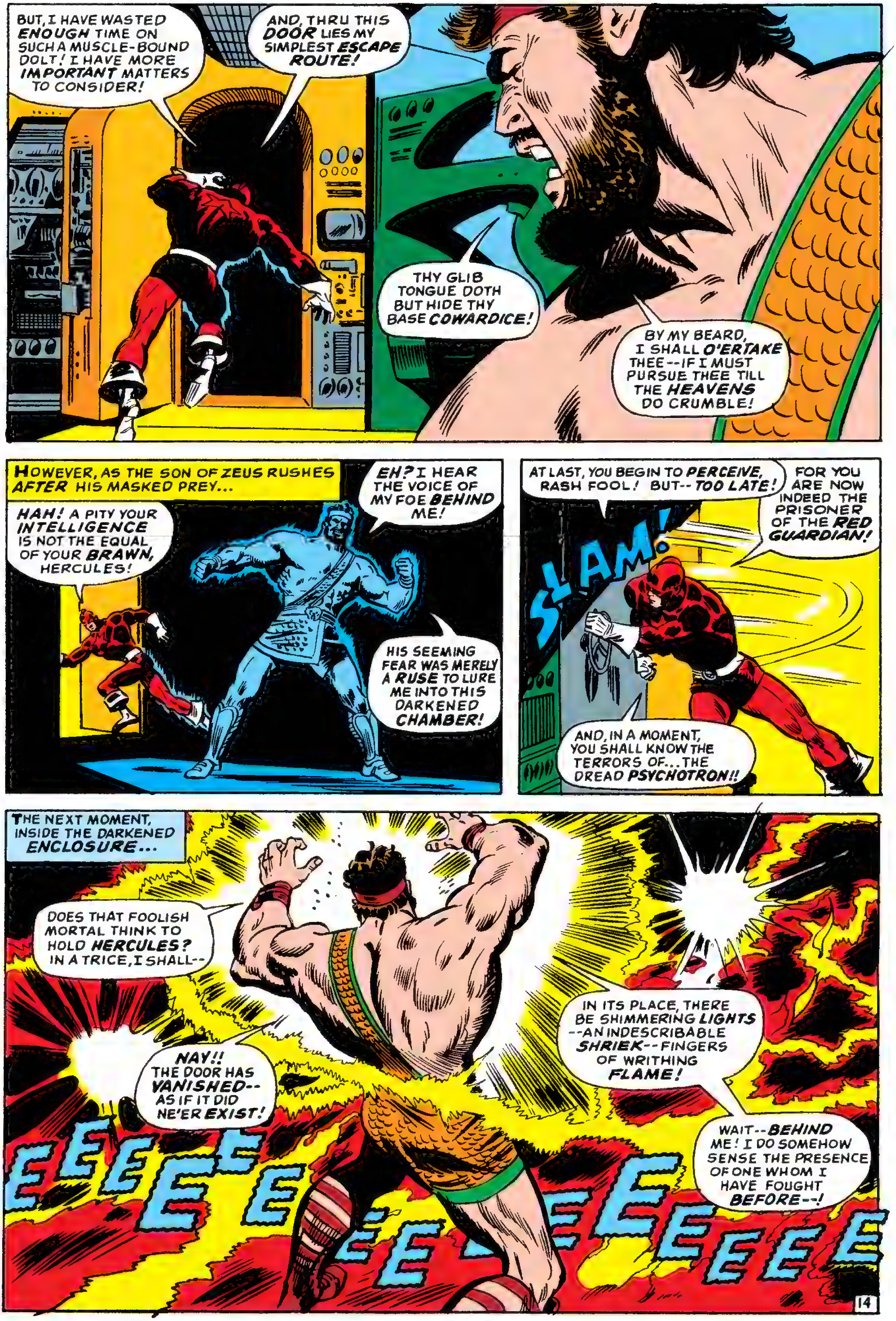

BUT, AS HERCULES AND HAWKEYE PLUNGE THRU THE MAMMOTH OPENING...
WE DARE SHOW THEM MERCY NO LONGER!
SURRENDER--OR YOU FORCE US TO KILL YOU!
SINCE THE TIME OF PROMETHEUS, MORTALS HAVE EVER PLAYED WITH SEARING FIRE!
YET NOW, BY THE GODS, I SHALL--
YOU'LL NOTHIN', MUSCLES! I CAN'T LET THOSE BULGIN' BICEPS OF YOURS STEAL THE WHOLE SHOW!
THIS ONE IS ON HAWKEYE!
--OR, HAD YOU FORGOT I WAS ALONG?
HAH! EVEN THE FAR-DARTING APOLLO HIMSELF HATH NO SHAFTS LIKE THINE!
THE SWINE MOCK US--WHILE AN ARROW BINDS US LIKE SHEAVES!
WHIISSH!
REMIND ME TO OPEN UP A NOVELTY SHOP IN OLYMPUS, SOMETIME!
BUT, WE SHALL STILL PREVAIL--FOR THE RED GUARDIAN COMES!
THE RED GUARDIAN?? WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES IS A---?
SKRAK!
A SOUND QUESTION, AVENGER!
WHEN I HAVE DISPOSED OF YOUR LUMBERING COMRADE, I SHALL AWAKEN YOU--TO GIVE YOU THE DREADED ANSWER!
FWOOOOSH!
OWW!


NEXT, AS A GLEAMING, SPINNING METAL DISK RETURNS MAGNETICALLY TO A GLOVED HAND...
SO, THOU ART HE OF WHOM YON MINIONS SPAKE!
THAT I AM, INTRUDER...
AND YOU ARE HERCULES-- THAT BLUSTERING LIAR WHO CLAIMS TO BE AN OLYMPIAN GOD!

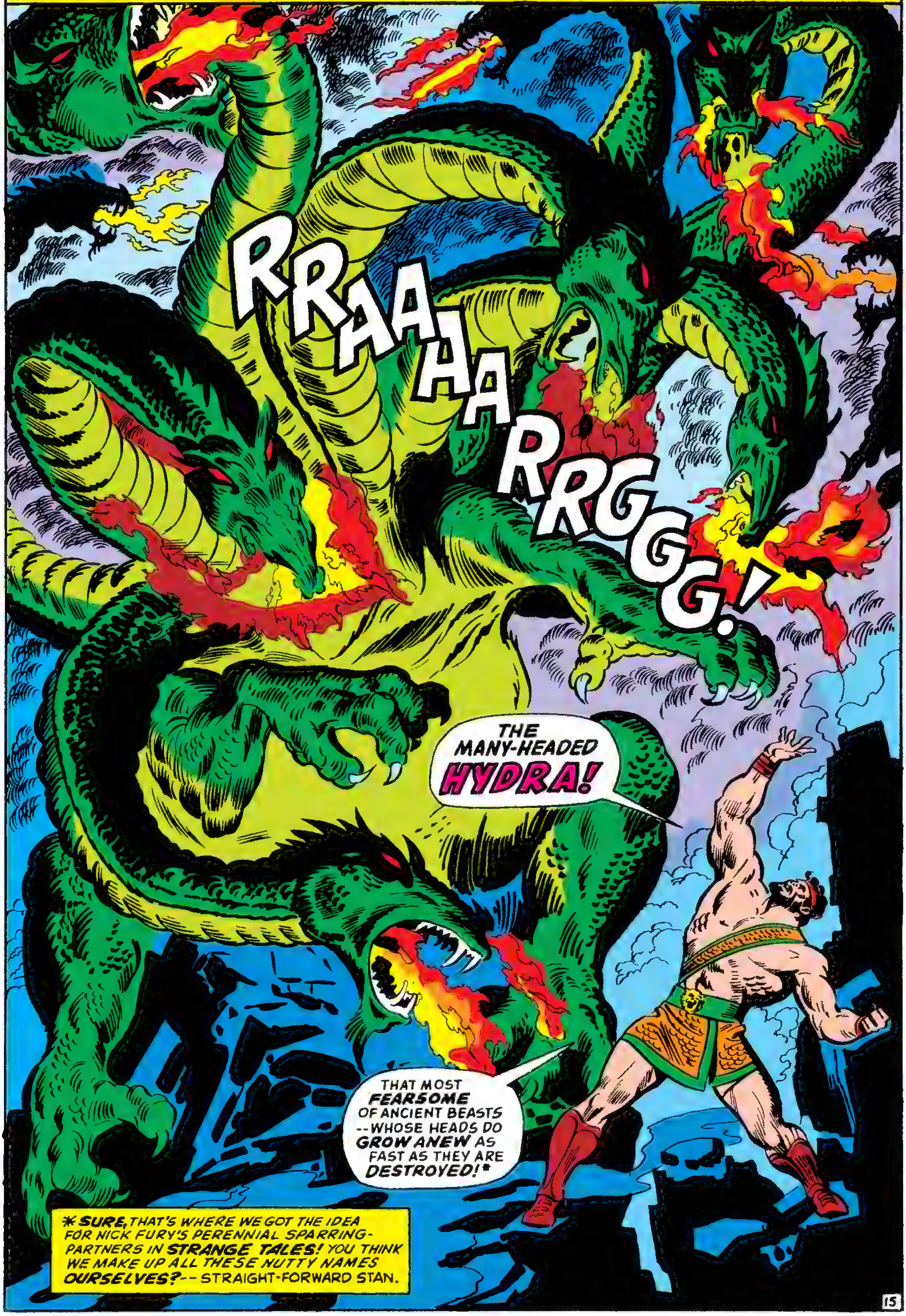

WHAT? DOST THOU DARE DOUBT THE WORD OF THE PRINCE OF POWER?
THEN, LET MY SHATTERING FISTS PROCLAIM THE FOLLY OF THINE UNBELIEF!
WONDER BEYOND WONDERS! THOU DOST ELUDE MY MIGHTIEST BLOW--!
BTAKK!
FOOL! DID YOU THINK THAT THE RED GUARDIAN WAS CREATED ONLY TO FALL IN HIS FIRST PITCHED BATTLE?
TRULY, MY BELT-EMBLEM AND STRENGTH WOULD BE USELESS AGAINST HERCULES! I MUST USE MY WITS--AND MY SPEED!

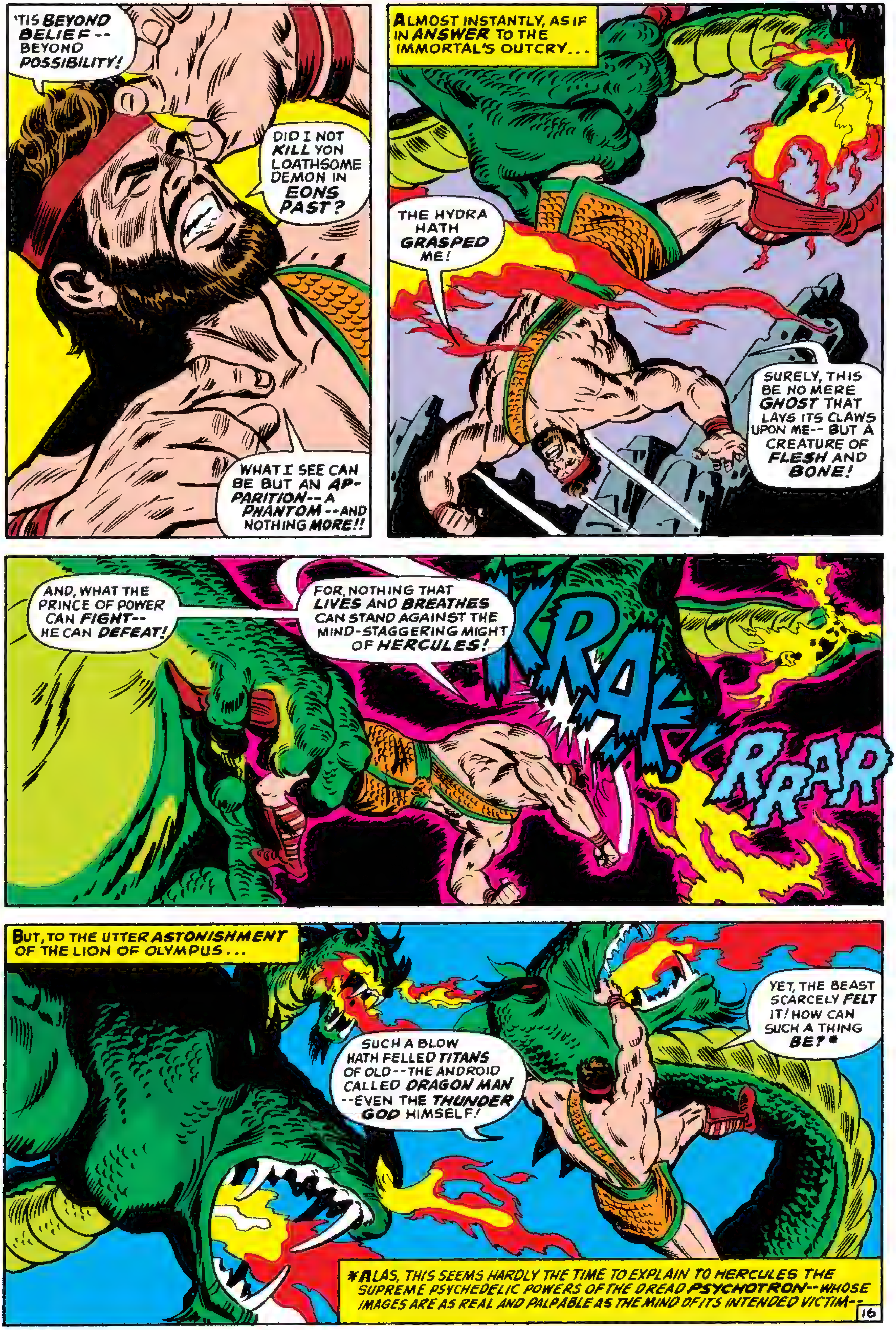

STAND YE STILL BUT A MOMENT, MORTAL, AND I SHALL PUT AN END TO THINE INTEMPERATE BOASTING!
SKRUNCH!
NO BLUNDERING LACKEY WHO SERVES THE ACCURSED CAPTAIN AMERICA SHALL DEFEAT ME!

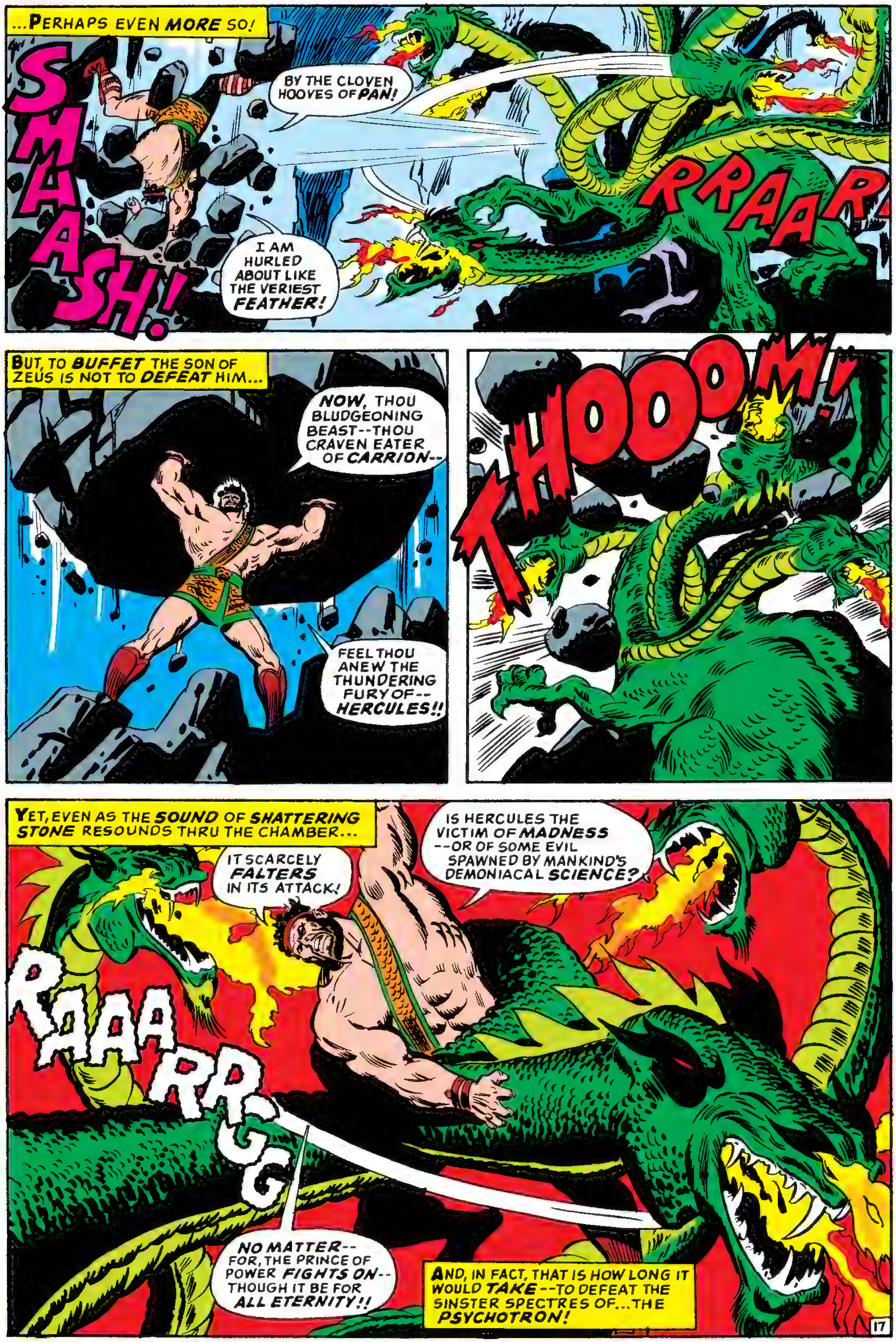

FTOOOM!
I SERVE NO MAN, INSOLENT ONE! BUT, CAPTAIN AMERICA-- LIKE HAWKEYE--IS MY FRIEND!
IN SOOTH, IF THOU WERT NOT EVIL, THOU WOULDST BE VERY LIKE THE STAR-SPANGLED AVENGER!
YOU ARE BLIND, BUFFOON--OR YOU WOULD SEE THAT I AM, IN EVERY WAY ...HIS SUPERIOR!

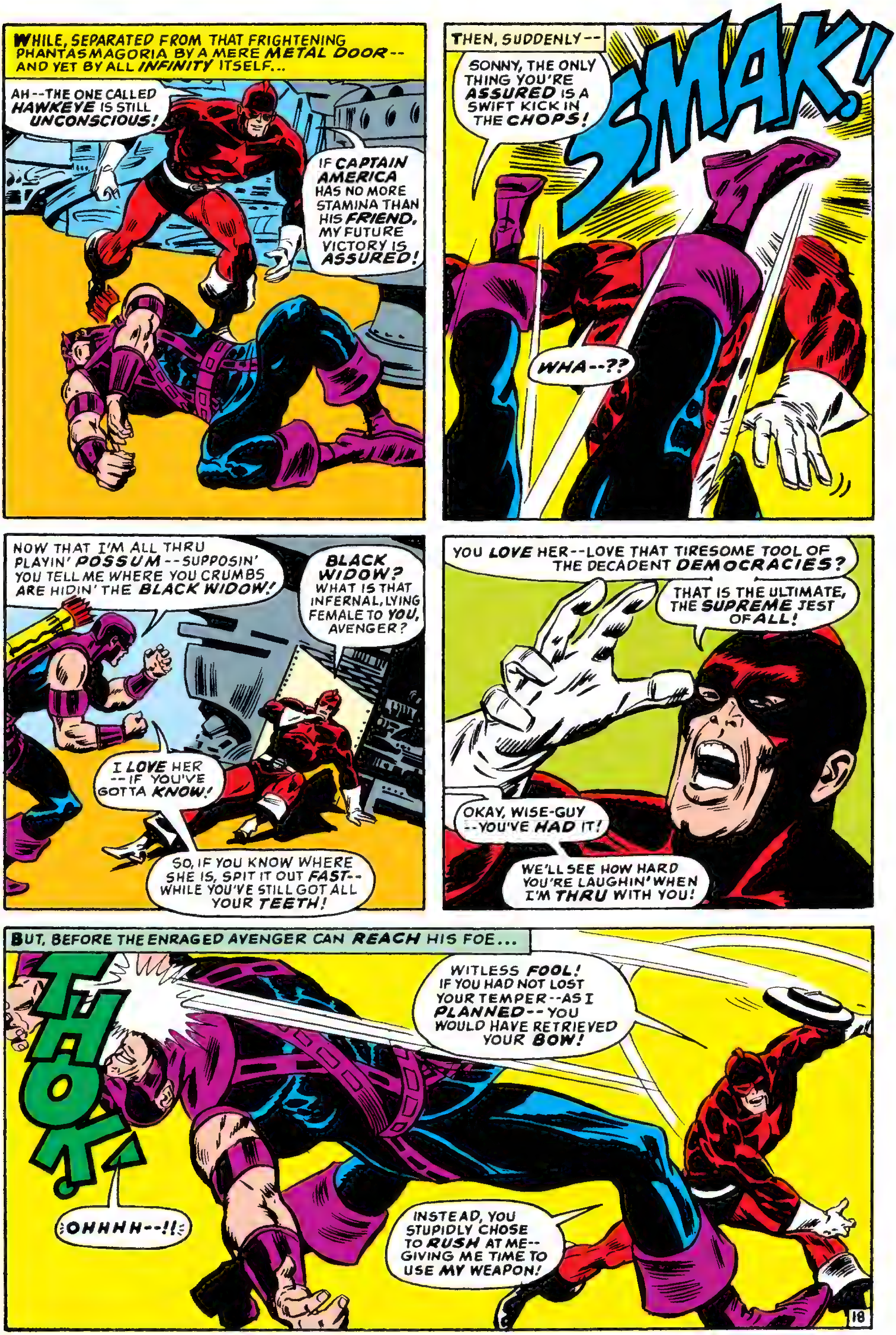

BUT, I HAVE WASTED ENOUGH TIME ON SUCH A MUSCLE-BOUND DOLT! I HAVE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO CONSIDER!
AND, THRU THIS DOOR LIES MY SIMPLEST ESCAPE ROUTE!
THY GLIB TONGUE DOTH BUT HIDE THY BASE COWARDICE!
BY MY BEARD, I SHALL O'ERTAKE THEE--IF I MUST PURSUE THEE TILL THE HEAVENS DO CRUMBLE!
HOWEVER, AS THE SON OF ZEUS RUSHES AFTER HIS MASKED PREY...
HAH! A PITY YOUR INTELLIGENCE IS NOT THE EQUAL OF YOUR BRAWN, HERCULES!
EH? I HEAR THE VOICE OF MY FOE BEHIND ME!
HIS SEEMING FEAR WAS MERELY A RUSE TO LURE ME INTO THIS DARKENED CHAMBER!
AT LAST, YOU BEGIN TO PERCEIVE, RASH FOOL! BUT--TOO LATE!
FOR YOU ARE NOW INDEED THE PRISONER OF THE RED GUARDIAN!
SLAM!
AND, IN A MOMENT, YOU SHALL KNOW THE TERRORS OF...THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON!!
THE NEXT MOMENT, INSIDE THE DARKENED ENCLOSURE...
DOES THAT FOOLISH MORTAL THINK TO HOLD HERCULES? IN A TRICE, I SHALL--
NAY!! THE DOOR HAS VANISHED--AS IF IT DID NE'ER EXIST!
IN ITS PLACE, THERE BE SHIMMERING LIGHTS--AN INDESCRIBABLE SHRIEK--FINGERS OF WRITHING FLAME!
WAIT--BEHIND ME! I DO SOMEHOW SENSE THE PRESENCE OF ONE WHOM I HAVE FOUGHT BEFORE--!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

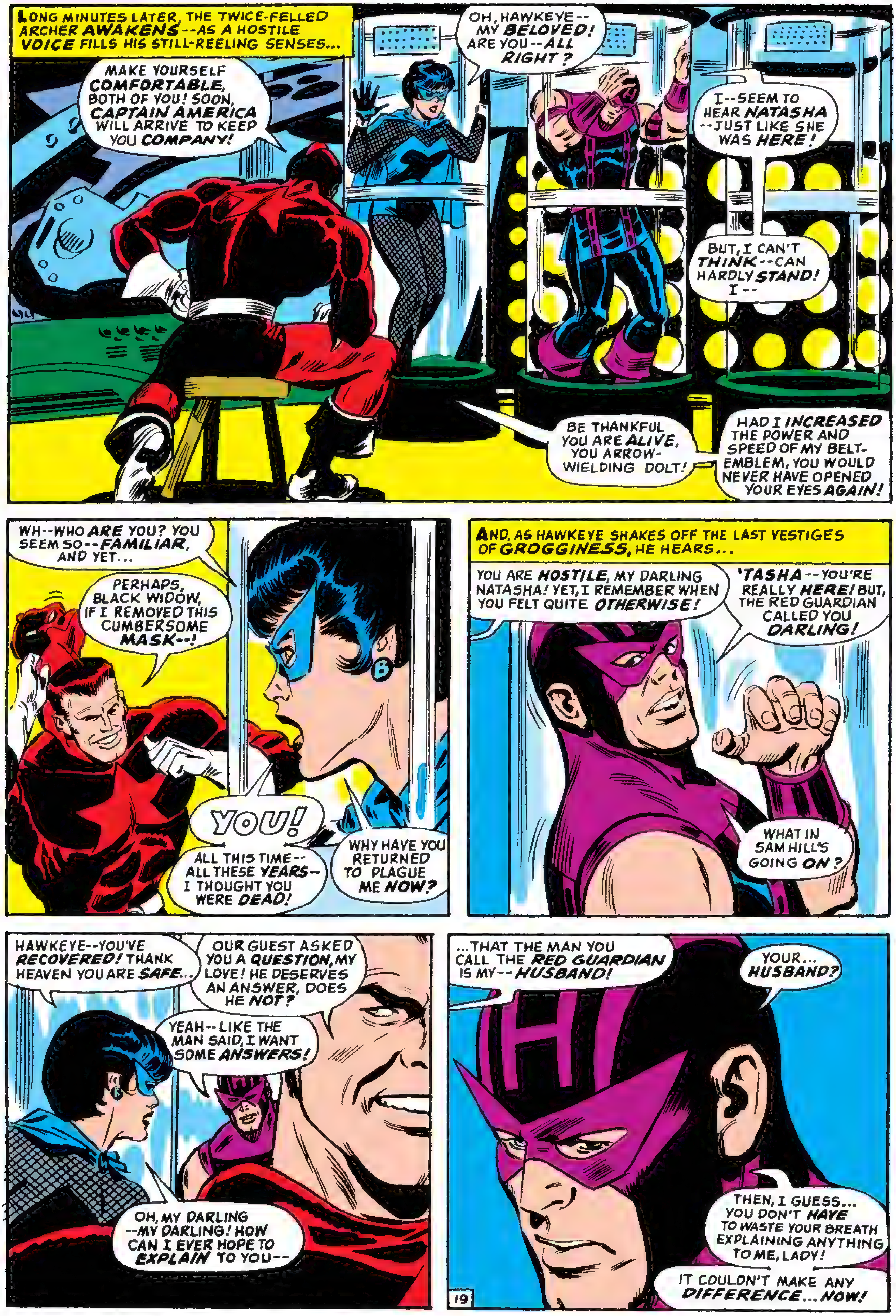
THEN, AS THE VERY FLOOR BENEATH HIM SEEMS TO TURN TO **STONY CRAGS**--AS A LONG-FORGOTTEN **ROAR** ECHOES THRU THE STYGIAN BLACKNESS--HERCULES **TURNS** TO BEHOLD--

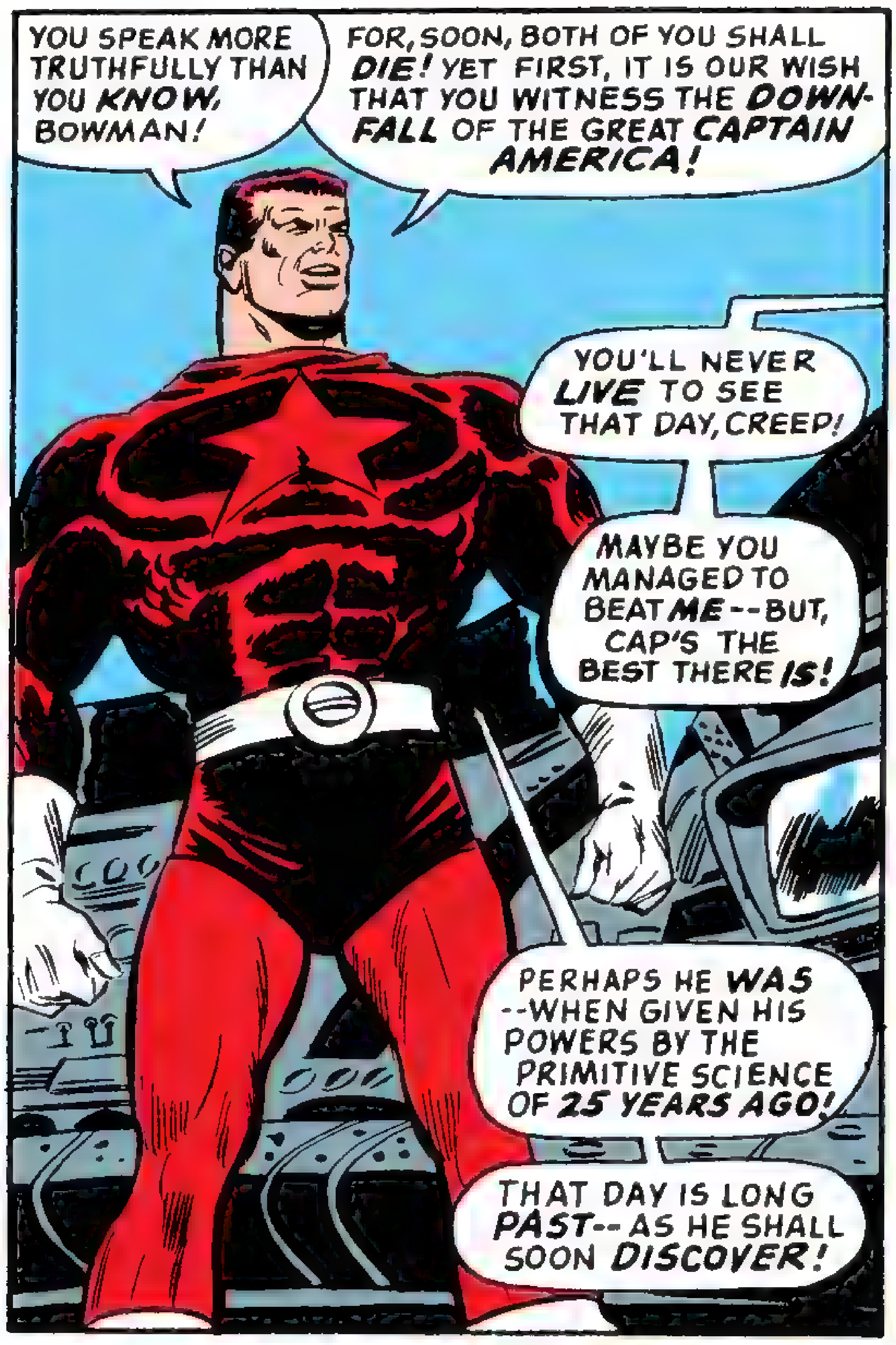

RRAAAAARRRGGG!
THE MANY-HEADED HYDRA!
THAT MOST FEARSOME OF ANCIENT BEASTS --WHOSE HEADS DO GROW ANEW AS FAST AS THEY ARE DESTROYED!*
* SURE, THAT'S WHERE WE GOT THE IDEA FOR NICK FURY'S PERENNIAL SPARRING-PARTNERS IN STRANGE TALES! YOU THINK WE MAKE UP ALL THESE NUTTY NAMES OURSELVES?-- STRAIGHT-FORWARD STAN.

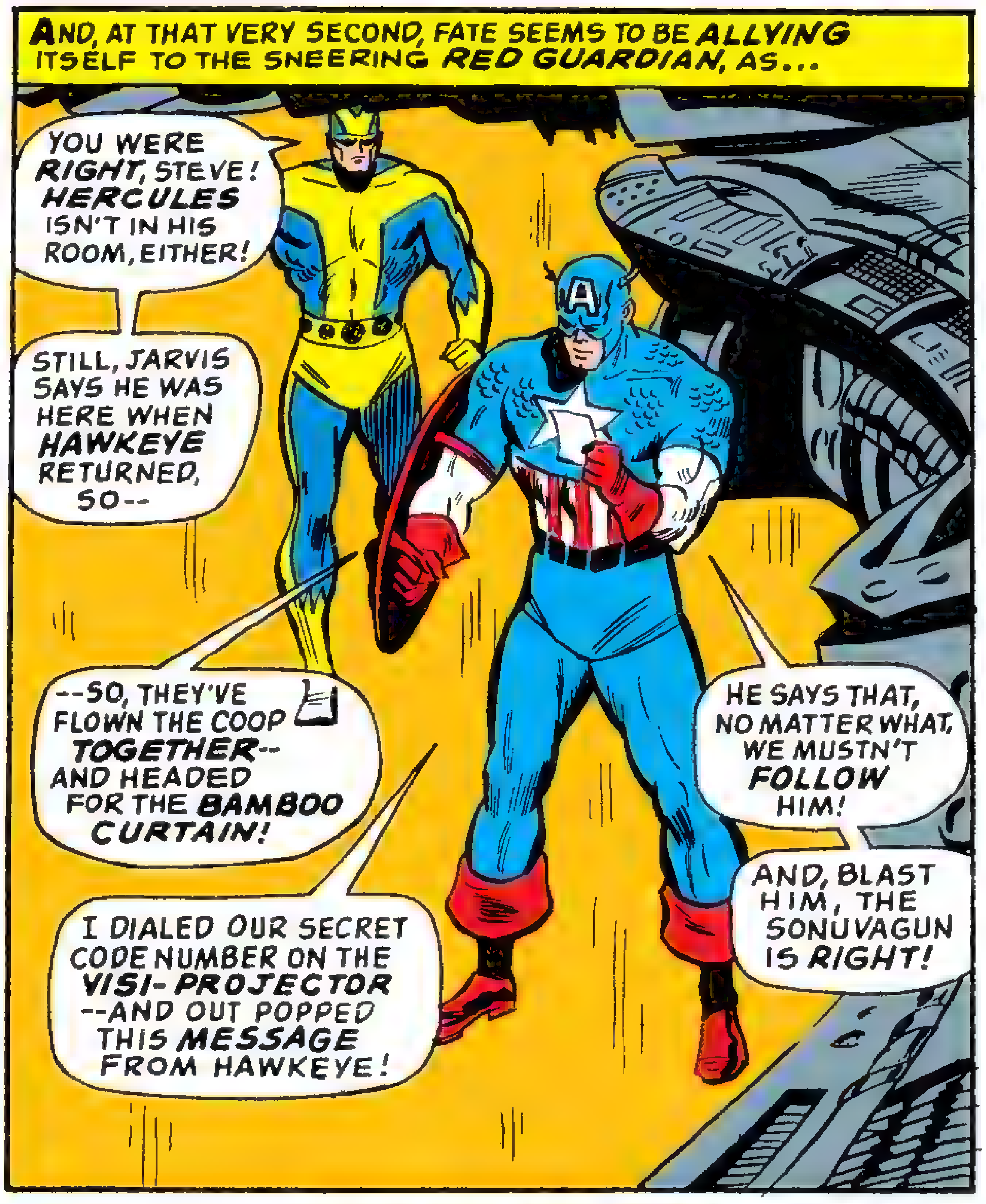

'TIS **BEYOND BELIEF** -- BEYOND **POSSIBILITY!**
DID I NOT **KILL** YON LOATHSOME DEMON IN **EONS PAST?**
WHAT I SEE CAN BE BUT AN **APPARITION**-- A **PHANTOM** --AND NOTHING **MORE!!**
ALMOST INSTANTLY, AS IF IN **ANSWER** TO THE IMMORTAL'S OUTCRY...
THE HYDRA HATH **GRASPED** ME!
SURELY, THIS BE NO MERE **GHOST** THAT LAYS ITS CLAWS UPON ME-- BUT A CREATURE OF **FLESH** AND **BONE!**
AND, WHAT THE PRINCE OF POWER CAN **FIGHT**-- HE CAN **DEFEAT!**
FOR, NOTHING THAT **LIVES** AND **BREATHES** CAN STAND AGAINST THE MIND-STAGGERING MIGHT OF **HERCULES!**
KRAK
RRAR
BUT, TO THE UTTER **ASTONISHMENT** OF THE LION OF OLYMPUS...
SUCH A BLOW HATH FELLED **TITANS** OF OLD--THE ANDROID CALLED **DRAGON MAN** --EVEN THE **THUNDER GOD** HIMSELF!
YET, THE BEAST SCARCELY **FELT** IT! HOW CAN SUCH A THING **BE?***
***ALAS, THIS SEEMS HARDLY THE TIME TO EXPLAIN TO HERCULES THE SUPREME PSYCHEDELIC POWERS OF THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON--WHOSE IMAGES ARE AS REAL AND PALPABLE AS THE MIND OF ITS INTENDED VICTIM--**

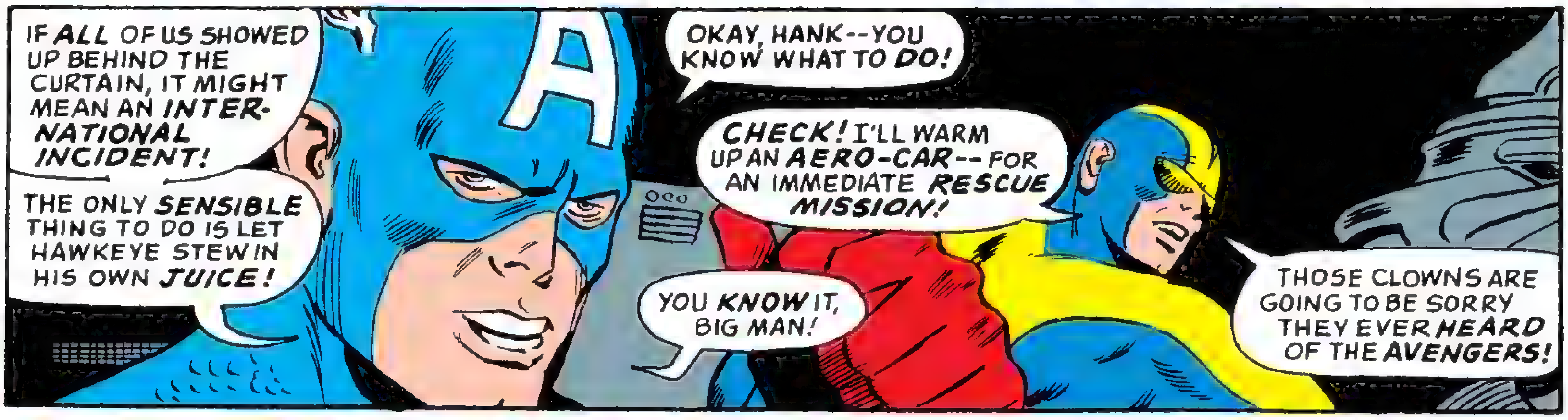

...PERHAPS EVEN MORE SO!
SMAASH!
BY THE CLOVEN HOOVES OF PAN!
I AM HURLED ABOUT LIKE THE VERIEST FEATHER!
RRAAR
BUT, TO BUFFET THE SON OF ZEUS IS NOT TO DEFEAT HIM...
NOW, THOU BLUDGEONING BEAST--THOU CRAVEN EATER OF CARRION--
FEEL THOU ANEW THE THUNDERING FURY OF--HERCULES!!
THOOOM!
YET, EVEN AS THE SOUND OF SHATTERING STONE RESOUNDS THRU THE CHAMBER...
IT SCARCELY FALTERS IN ITS ATTACK!
IS HERCULES THE VICTIM OF MADNESS --OR OF SOME EVIL SPAWNED BY MANKIND'S DEMONIACAL SCIENCE?
RAAARRRG
NO MATTER--FOR, THE PRINCE OF POWER FIGHTS ON--THOUGH IT BE FOR ALL ETERNITY!!
AND, IN FACT, THAT IS HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE--TO DEFEAT THE SINSTER SPECTRES OF...THE PSYCHOTRON!

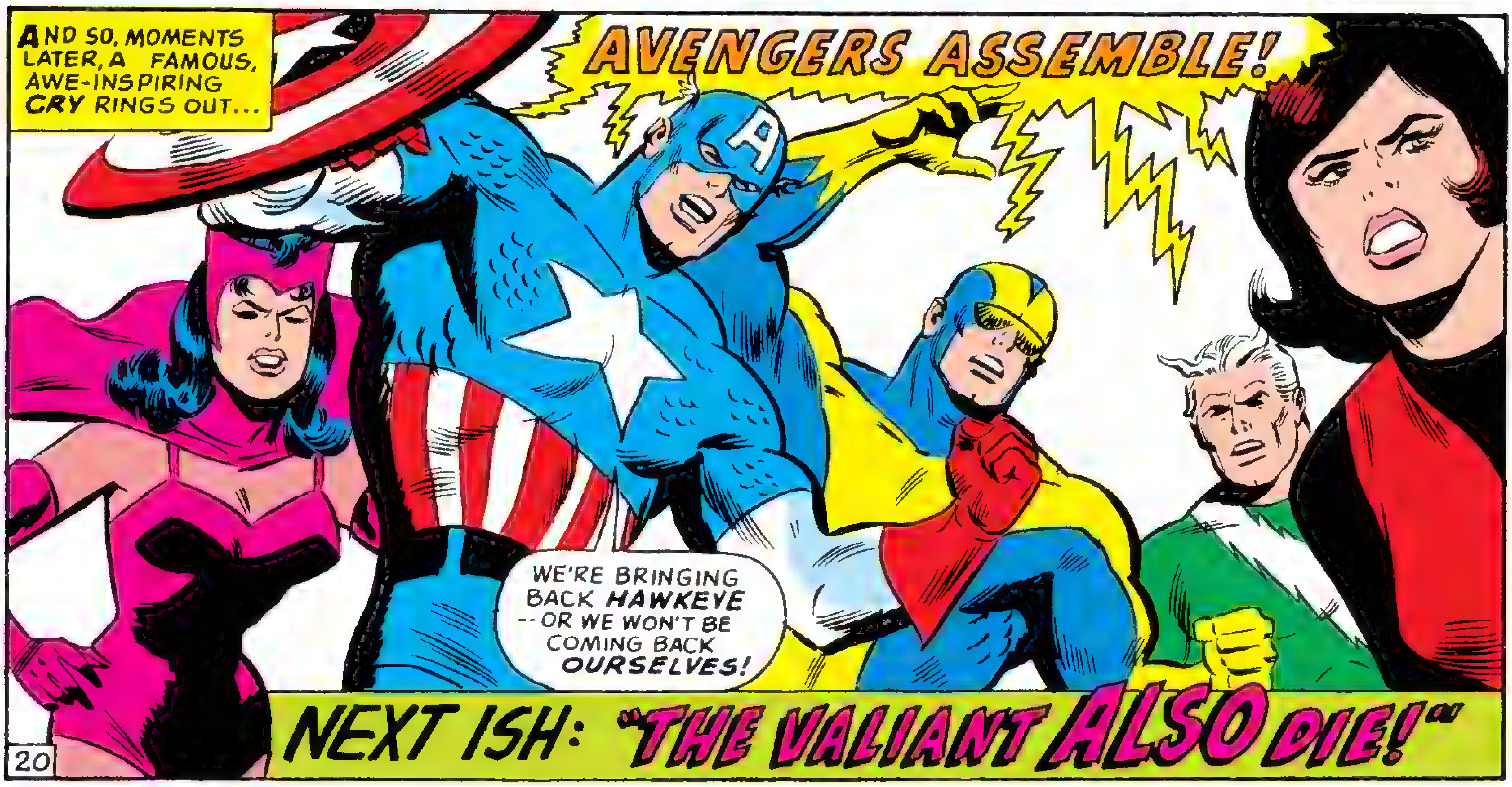

WHILE, SEPARATED FROM THAT FRIGHTENING PHANTASMAGORIA BY A MERE METAL DOOR-- AND YET BY ALL INFINITY ITSELF...
AH--THE ONE CALLED HAWKEYE IS STILL UNCONSCIOUS!
IF CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS NO MORE STAMINA THAN HIS FRIEND, MY FUTURE VICTORY IS ASSURED!
THEN, SUDDENLY--
SONNY, THE ONLY THING YOU'RE ASSURED IS A SWIFT KICK IN THE CHOPS!
SMAK!
WHA--??
NOW THAT I'M ALL THRU PLAYIN' POSSUM--SUPPOSIN' YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU CRUMBS ARE HIDIN' THE BLACK WIDOW!
BLACK WIDOW? WHAT IS THAT INFERNAL, LYING FEMALE TO YOU, AVENGER?
I LOVE HER --IF YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW!
SO, IF YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS, SPIT IT OUT FAST-- WHILE YOU'VE STILL GOT ALL YOUR TEETH!
YOU LOVE HER--LOVE THAT TIRESOME TOOL OF THE DECADENT DEMOCRACIES?
THAT IS THE ULTIMATE, THE SUPREME JEST OF ALL!
OKAY, WISE-GUY --YOU'VE HAD IT!
WE'LL SEE HOW HARD YOU'RE LAUGHIN' WHEN I'M THRU WITH YOU!
BUT, BEFORE THE ENRAGED AVENGER CAN REACH HIS FOE...
THOK!
WITLESS FOOL! IF YOU HAD NOT LOST YOUR TEMPER--AS I PLANNED--YOU WOULD HAVE RETRIEVED YOUR BOW!
OHHHH--!!
INSTEAD, YOU STUPIDLY CHOSE TO RUSH AT ME-- GIVING ME TIME TO USE MY WEAPON!


LONG MINUTES LATER, THE TWICE-FELLED ARCHER AWAKENS--AS A HOSTILE VOICE FILLS HIS STILL-REELING SENSES...
MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, BOTH OF YOU! SOON, CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL ARRIVE TO KEEP YOU COMPANY!
OH, HAWKEYE--MY BELOVED! ARE YOU--ALL RIGHT?
I--SEEM TO HEAR NATASHA--JUST LIKE SHE WAS HERE!
BUT, I CAN'T THINK--CAN HARDLY STAND! I--
BE THANKFUL YOU ARE ALIVE, YOU ARROW-WIELDING DOLT!
HAD I INCREASED THE POWER AND SPEED OF MY BELT-EMBLEM, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE OPENED YOUR EYES AGAIN!
WH--WHO ARE YOU? YOU SEEM SO--FAMILIAR, AND YET...
PERHAPS, BLACK WIDOW, IF I REMOVED THIS CUMBERSOME MASK--!
YOU! ALL THIS TIME--ALL THESE YEARS--I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!
WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED TO PLAGUE ME NOW?
AND, AS HAWKEYE SHAKES OFF THE LAST VESTIGES OF GROGGINESS, HE HEARS...
YOU ARE HOSTILE, MY DARLING NATASHA! YET, I REMEMBER WHEN YOU FELT QUITE OTHERWISE!
'TASHA--YOU'RE REALLY HERE! BUT, THE RED GUARDIAN CALLED YOU DARLING!
WHAT IN SAM HILL'S GOING ON?
HAWKEYE--YOU'VE RECOVERED! THANK HEAVEN YOU ARE SAFE...
OUR GUEST ASKED YOU A QUESTION, MY LOVE! HE DESERVES AN ANSWER, DOES HE NOT?
YEAH--LIKE THE MAN SAID, I WANT SOME ANSWERS!
OH, MY DARLING--MY DARLING! HOW CAN I EVER HOPE TO EXPLAIN TO YOU--
...THAT THE MAN YOU CALL THE RED GUARDIAN IS MY--HUSBAND!
YOUR... HUSBAND?
THEN, I GUESS... YOU DON'T HAVE TO WASTE YOUR BREATH EXPLAINING ANYTHING TO ME, LADY!
IT COULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE... NOW!


YOU SPEAK MORE TRUTHFULLY THAN YOU **KNOW**, BOWMAN!
FOR, SOON, BOTH OF YOU SHALL **DIE!** YET FIRST, IT IS OUR WISH THAT YOU WITNESS THE **DOWNFALL** OF THE GREAT **CAPTAIN AMERICA!**
YOU'LL NEVER **LIVE** TO SEE THAT DAY, CREEP!
MAYBE YOU MANAGED TO BEAT **ME**--BUT, CAP'S THE BEST THERE **IS!**
PERHAPS HE **WAS**--WHEN GIVEN HIS POWERS BY THE PRIMITIVE SCIENCE OF **25 YEARS AGO!**
THAT DAY IS LONG **PAST**--AS HE SHALL SOON **DISCOVER!**


AND, AT THAT VERY SECOND, FATE SEEMS TO BE **ALLYING** ITSELF TO THE SNEERING **RED GUARDIAN**, AS...
YOU WERE **RIGHT**, STEVE! **HERCULES** ISN'T IN HIS ROOM, EITHER!
STILL, JARVIS SAYS HE WAS HERE WHEN **HAWKEYE** RETURNED, SO--
--SO, THEY'VE FLOWN THE COOP **TOGETHER**--AND HEADED FOR THE **BAMBOO CURTAIN!**
I DIALED OUR SECRET CODE NUMBER ON THE **VISI-PROJECTOR**--AND OUT POPPED THIS **MESSAGE** FROM HAWKEYE!
HE SAYS THAT, NO MATTER WHAT, WE MUSTN'T **FOLLOW** HIM!
AND, BLAST HIM, THE SONUVAGUN IS **RIGHT!**

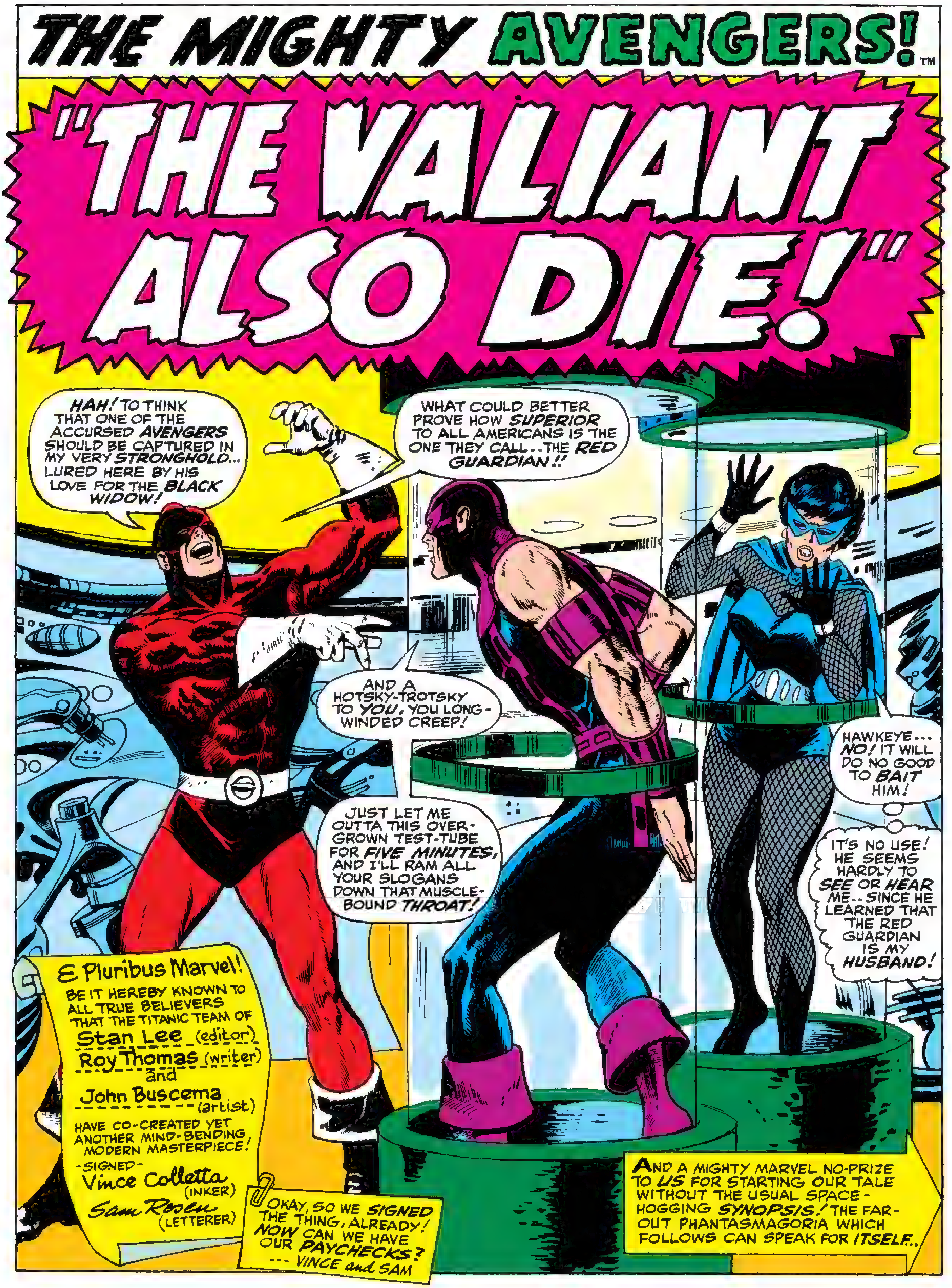

IF **ALL** OF US SHOWED UP BEHIND THE CURTAIN, IT MIGHT MEAN AN **INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT!**
THE ONLY **SENSIBLE** THING TO DO IS LET HAWKEYE STEW IN HIS OWN **JUICE!**
OKAY, HANK--YOU KNOW WHAT TO **DO!**
CHECK! I'LL WARM UP AN **AERO-CAR**--FOR AN IMMEDIATE **RESCUE MISSION!**
YOU **KNOW** IT, BIG MAN!
THOSE CLOWNS ARE GOING TO BE SORRY THEY EVER **HEARD** OF THE **AVENGERS!**

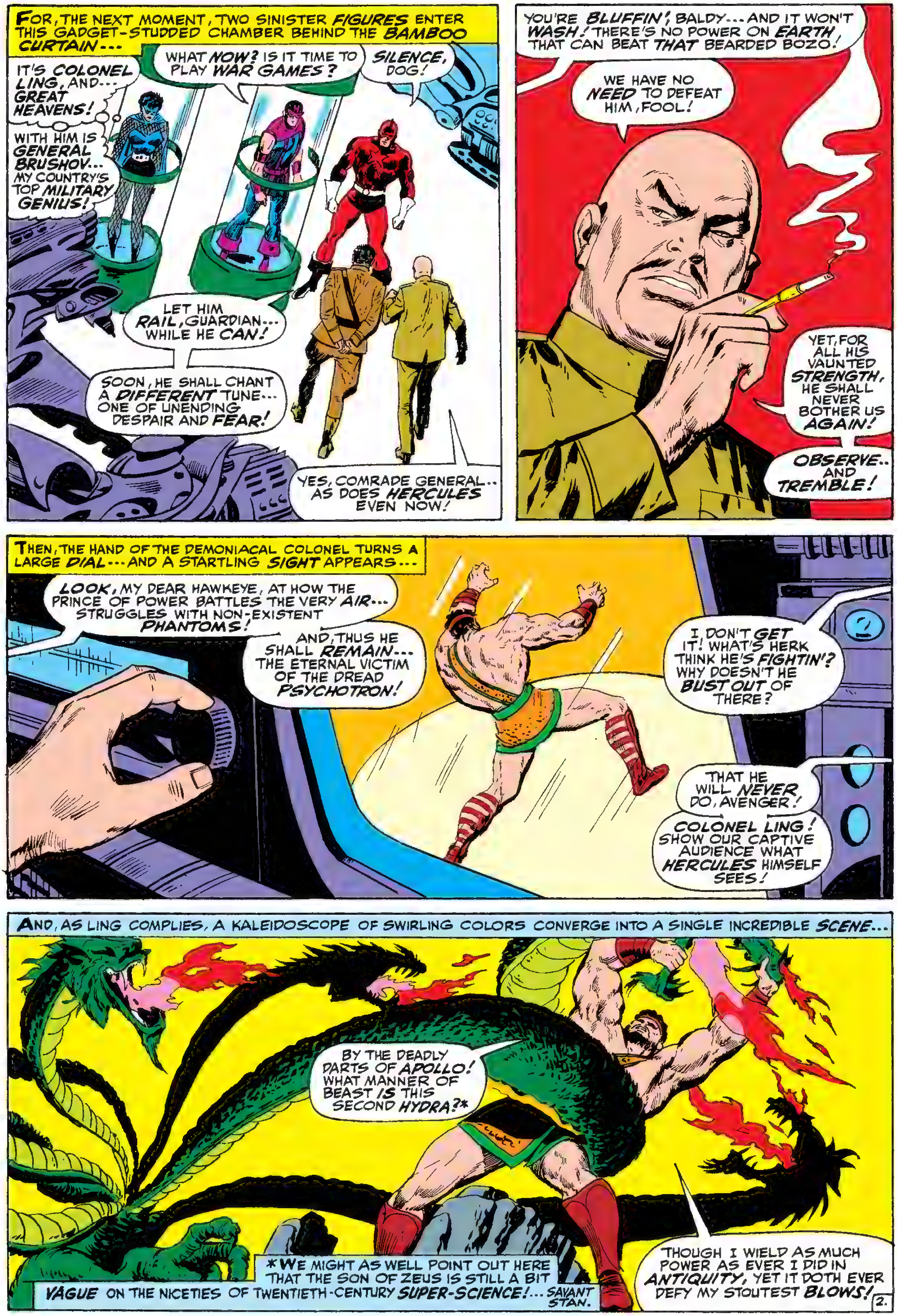

AND SO, MOMENTS LATER, A FAMOUS, AWE-INSPIRING **CRY** RINGS OUT...
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
WE'RE BRINGING BACK **HAWKEYE**--OR WE WON'T BE COMING BACK **OURSELVES!**
NEXT ISH: "THE VALIANT ALSO DIE!"

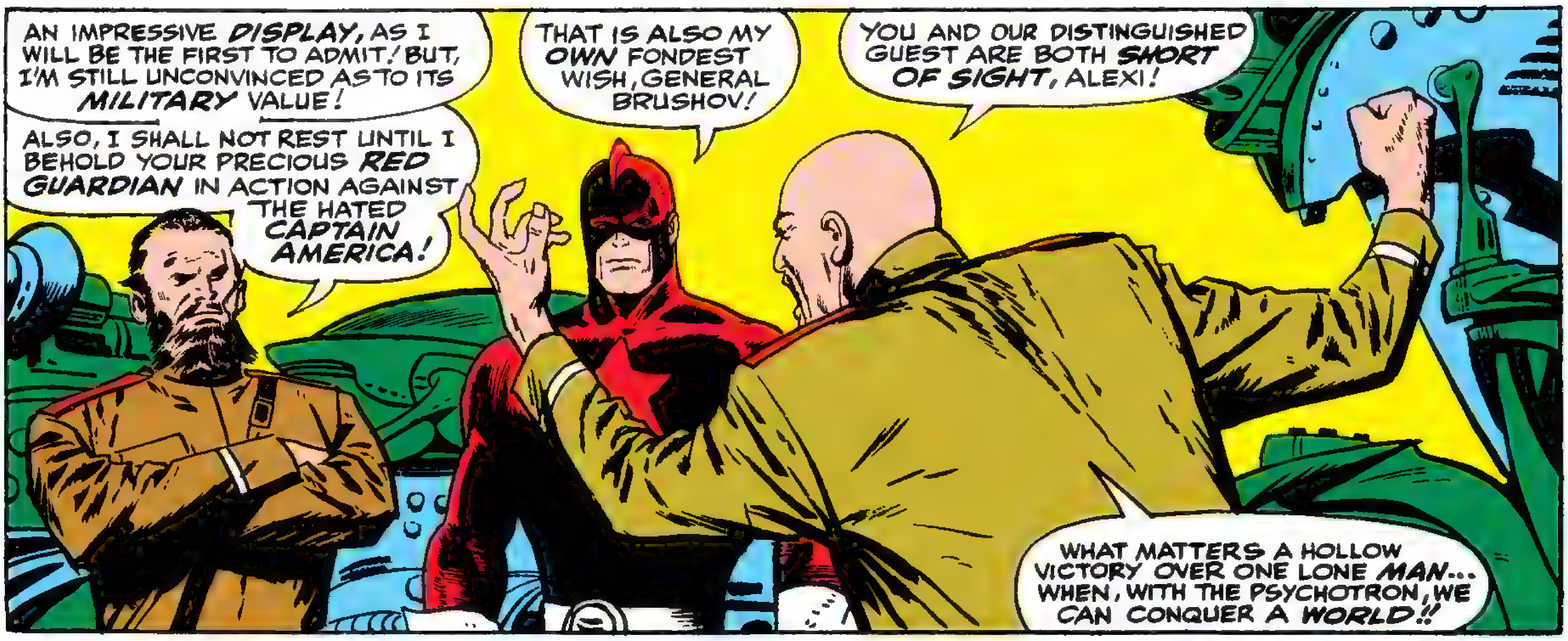
THE AVENGERS ™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
44 SEPT
WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MARVEL MADNESS!

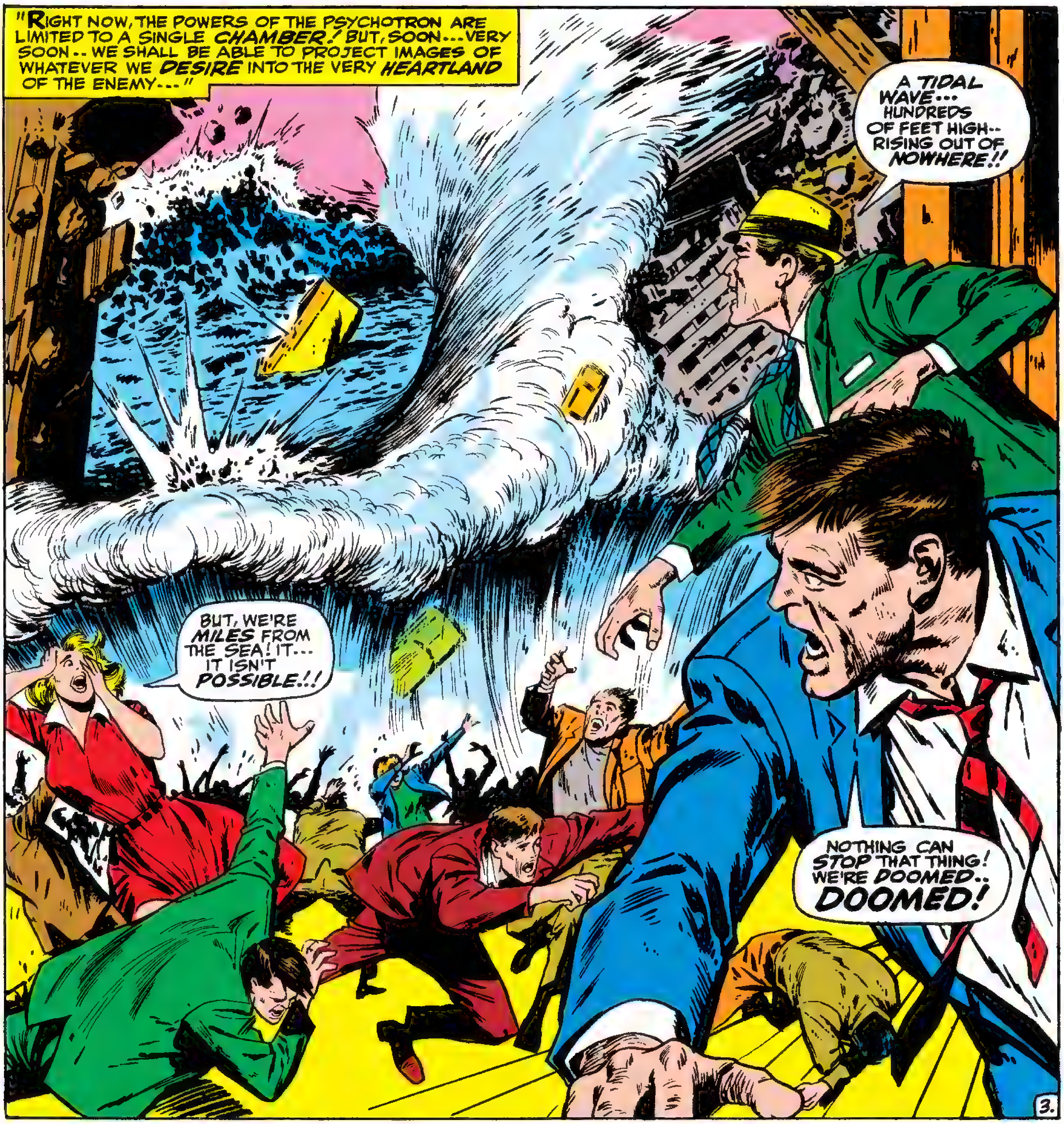
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

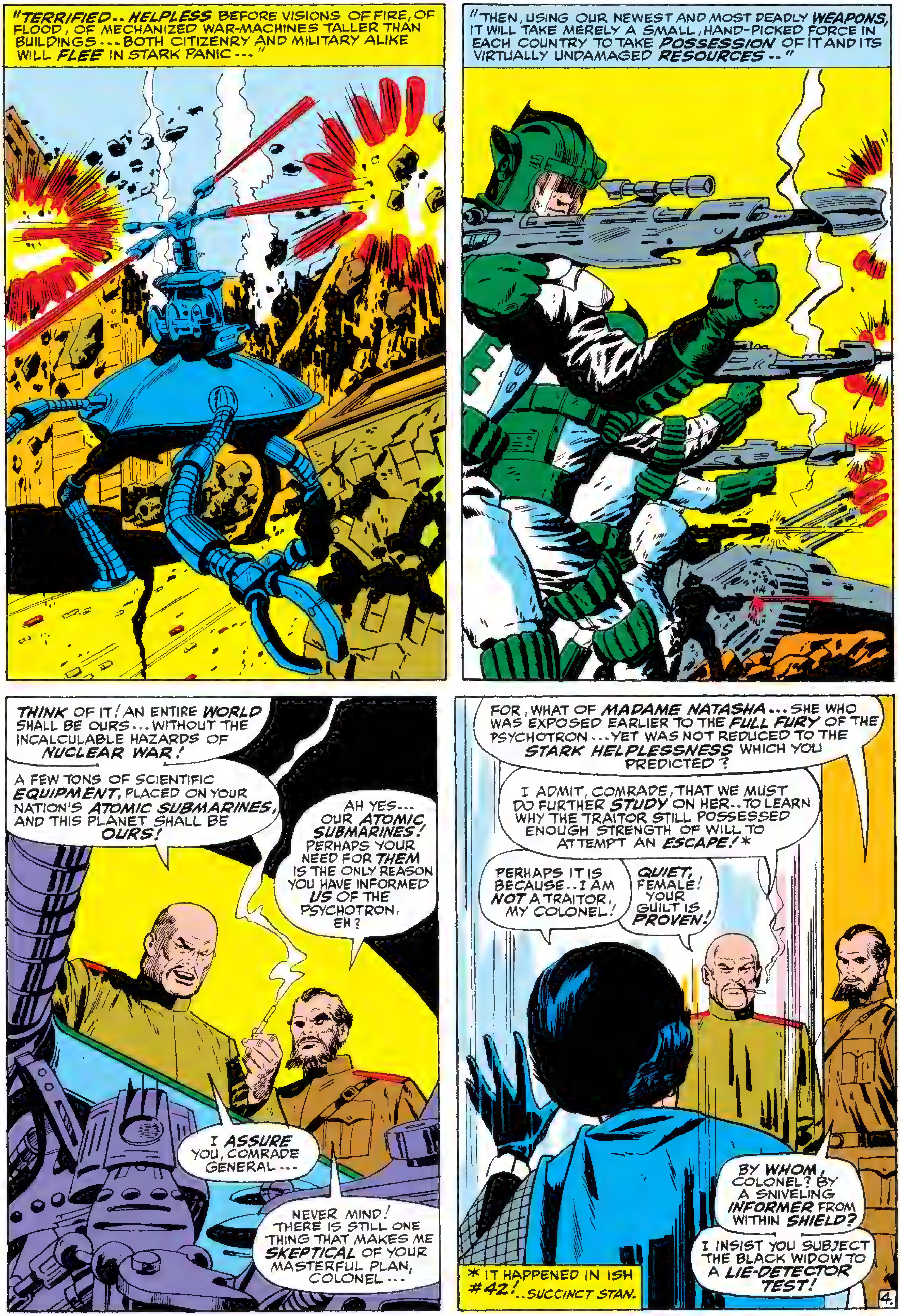
"THE VALIANT ALSO DIE!"

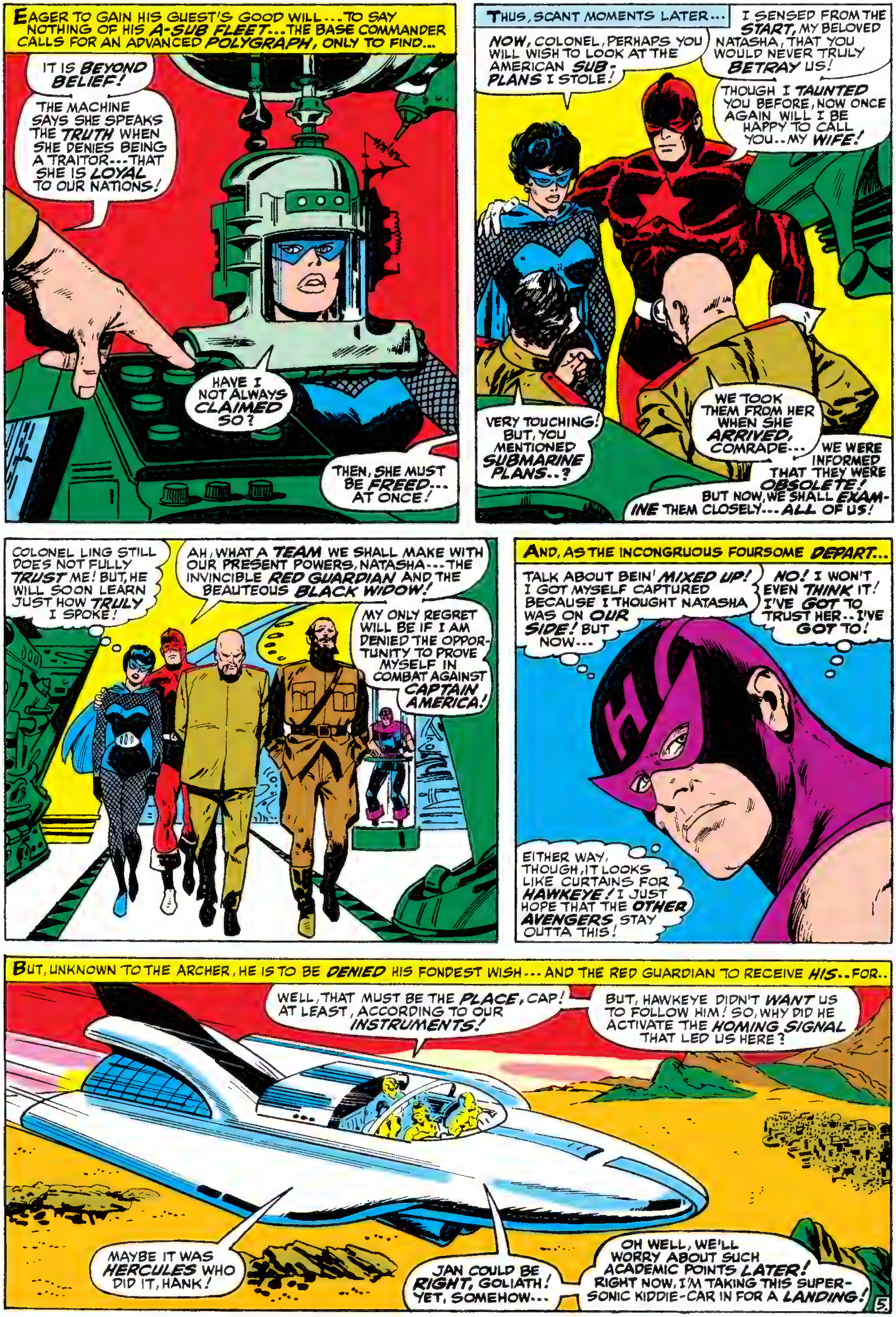

HAH! TO THINK THAT ONE OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS SHOULD BE CAPTURED IN MY VERY STRONGHOLD... LURED HERE BY HIS LOVE FOR THE BLACK WIDOW!
WHAT COULD BETTER PROVE HOW SUPERIOR TO ALL AMERICANS IS THE ONE THEY CALL.. THE RED GUARDIAN!!
AND A HOTSKY-TROTSKY TO YOU, YOU LONG-WINDED CREEP!
JUST LET ME OUTTA THIS OVER-GROWN TEST-TUBE FOR FIVE MINUTES, AND I'LL RAM ALL YOUR SLOGANS DOWN THAT MUSCLE-BOUND THROAT!
HAWKEYE... NO! IT WILL DO NO GOOD TO BAIT HIM!
IT'S NO USE! HE SEEMS HARDLY TO SEE OR HEAR ME.. SINCE HE LEARNED THAT THE RED GUARDIAN IS MY HUSBAND!
E Pluribus Marvel! BE IT HEREBY KNOWN TO ALL TRUE BELIEVERS THAT THE TITANIC TEAM OF Stan Lee (editor) Roy Thomas (writer) and John Buscema (artist) HAVE CO-CREATED YET ANOTHER MIND-BENDING MODERN MASTERPIECE! -SIGNED- Vince Colletta (INKER) Sam Rosen (LETTERER)
OKAY, SO WE SIGNED THE THING, ALREADY! NOW CAN WE HAVE OUR PAYCHECKS? ... VINCE and SAM
AND A MIGHTY MARVEL NO-PRIZE TO US FOR STARTING OUR TALE WITHOUT THE USUAL SPACE-HOGGING SYNOPSIS! THE FAR-OUT PHANTASMAGORIA WHICH FOLLOWS CAN SPEAK FOR ITSELF..

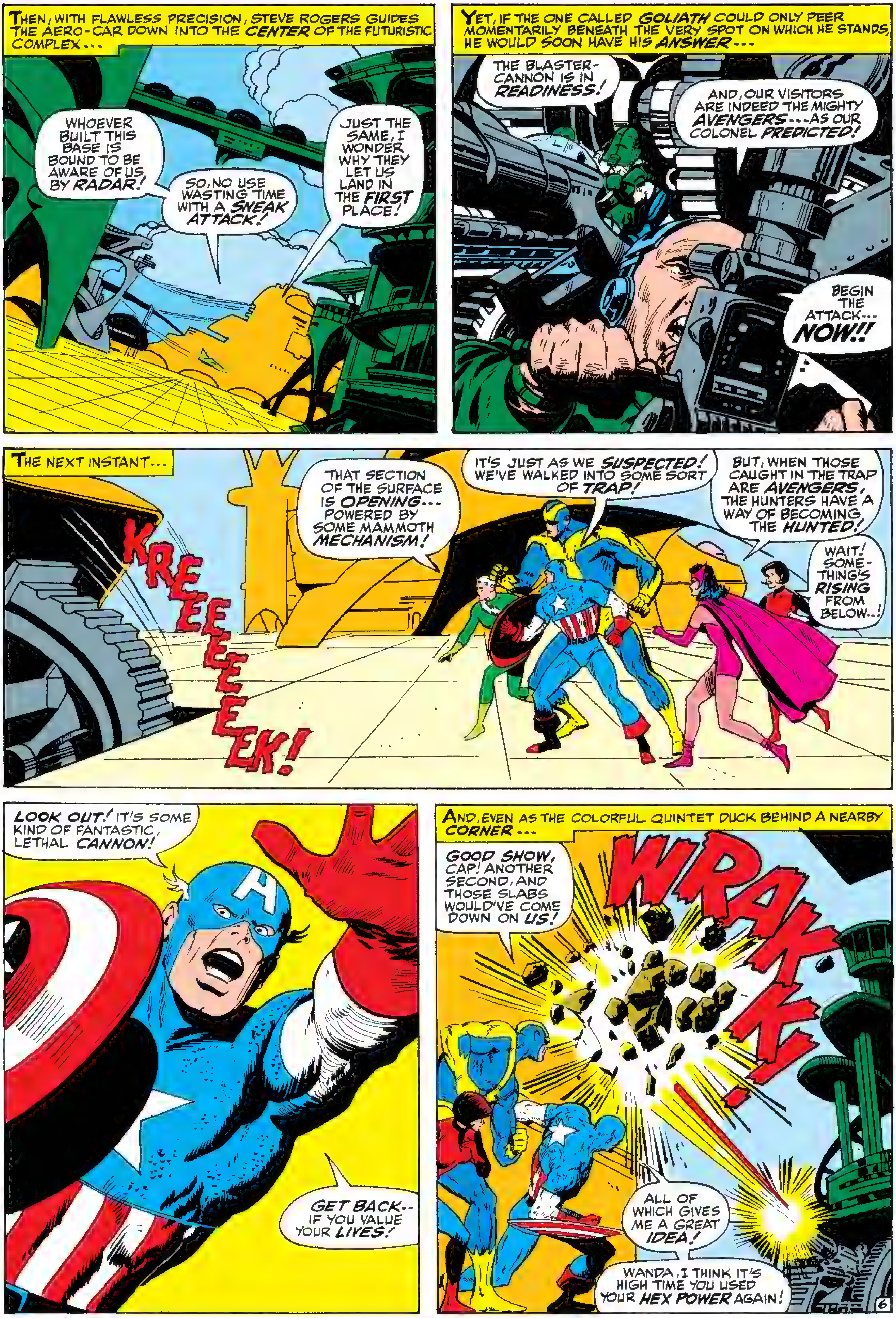

FOR, THE NEXT MOMENT, TWO SINISTER FIGURES ENTER THIS GADGET-STUDDED CHAMBER BEHIND THE BAMBOO CURTAIN...
IT'S COLONEL LING, AND... GREAT HEAVENS!
WITH HIM IS GENERAL BRUSHOV... MY COUNTRY'S TOP MILITARY GENIUS!
WHAT NOW? IS IT TIME TO PLAY WAR GAMES?
SILENCE, DOG!
LET HIM RAIL, GUARDIAN... WHILE HE CAN!
SOON, HE SHALL CHANT A DIFFERENT TUNE... ONE OF UNENDING DESPAIR AND FEAR!
YES, COMRADE GENERAL... AS DOES HERCULES EVEN NOW!
YOU'RE BLUFFIN', BALDY... AND IT WON'T WASH! THERE'S NO POWER ON EARTH THAT CAN BEAT THAT BEARDED BOZO!
WE HAVE NO NEED TO DEFEAT HIM, FOOL!
YET, FOR ALL HIS VAUNTED STRENGTH, HE SHALL NEVER BOTHER US AGAIN!
OBSERVE.. AND TREMBLE!
THEN, THE HAND OF THE DEMONIACAL COLONEL TURNS A LARGE DIAL... AND A STARTLING SIGHT APPEARS...
LOOK, MY DEAR HAWKEYE, AT HOW THE PRINCE OF POWER BATTLES THE VERY AIR... STRUGGLES WITH NON-EXISTENT PHANTOMS!
AND, THUS HE SHALL REMAIN... THE ETERNAL VICTIM OF THE DREAD PSYCHOTRON!
I DON'T GET IT! WHAT'S HERK THINK HE'S FIGHTIN'? WHY DOESN'T HE BUST OUT OF THERE?
THAT HE WILL NEVER DO, AVENGER!
COLONEL LING! SHOW OUR CAPTIVE AUDIENCE WHAT HERCULES HIMSELF SEES!
AND, AS LING COMPLIES, A KALEIDOSCOPE OF SWIRLING COLORS CONVERGE INTO A SINGLE INCREDIBLE SCENE...
BY THE DEADLY DARTS OF APOLLO! WHAT MANNER OF BEAST IS THIS SECOND HYDRA?*
THOUGH I WIELD AS MUCH POWER AS EVER I DID IN ANTIQUITY, YET IT DOTH EVER DEFY MY STOUTEST BLOWS!
*WE MIGHT AS WELL POINT OUT HERE THAT THE SON OF ZEUS IS STILL A BIT VAGUE ON THE NICETIES OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY SUPER-SCIENCE!... SAVANT STAN.

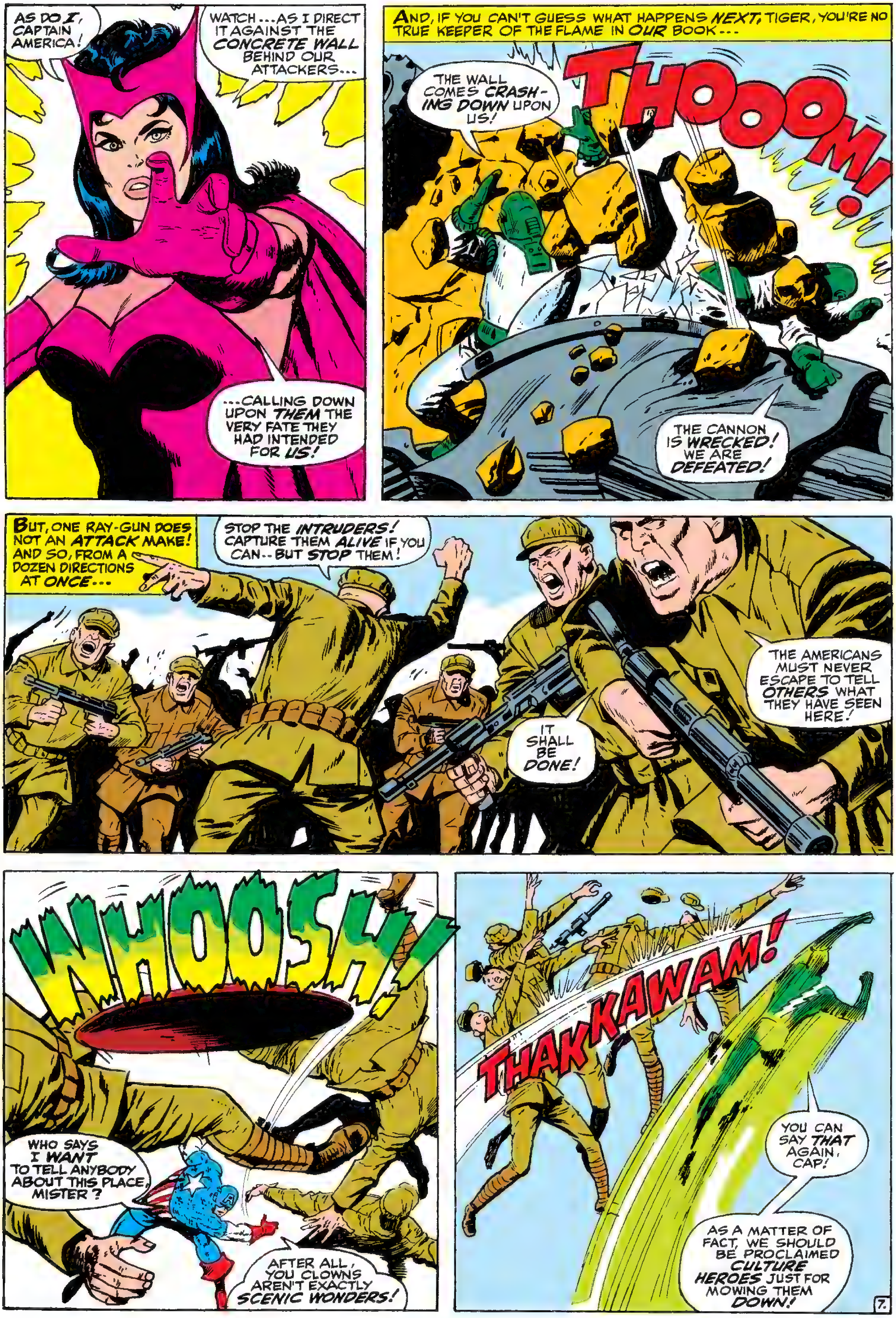

AN IMPRESSIVE *DISPLAY*, AS I WILL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT! BUT, I'M STILL UNCONVINCED AS TO ITS *MILITARY* VALUE!
ALSO, I SHALL NOT REST UNTIL I BEHOLD YOUR PRECIOUS *RED GUARDIAN* IN ACTION AGAINST THE HATED *CAPTAIN AMERICA*!
THAT IS ALSO MY *OWN* FONDEST WISH, GENERAL BRUSHOV!
YOU AND OUR DISTINGUISHED GUEST ARE BOTH *SHORT OF SIGHT*, ALEXI!
WHAT MATTERS A HOLLOW VICTORY OVER ONE LONE *MAN*... WHEN, WITH THE PSYCHOTRON, WE CAN CONQUER A *WORLD*!!

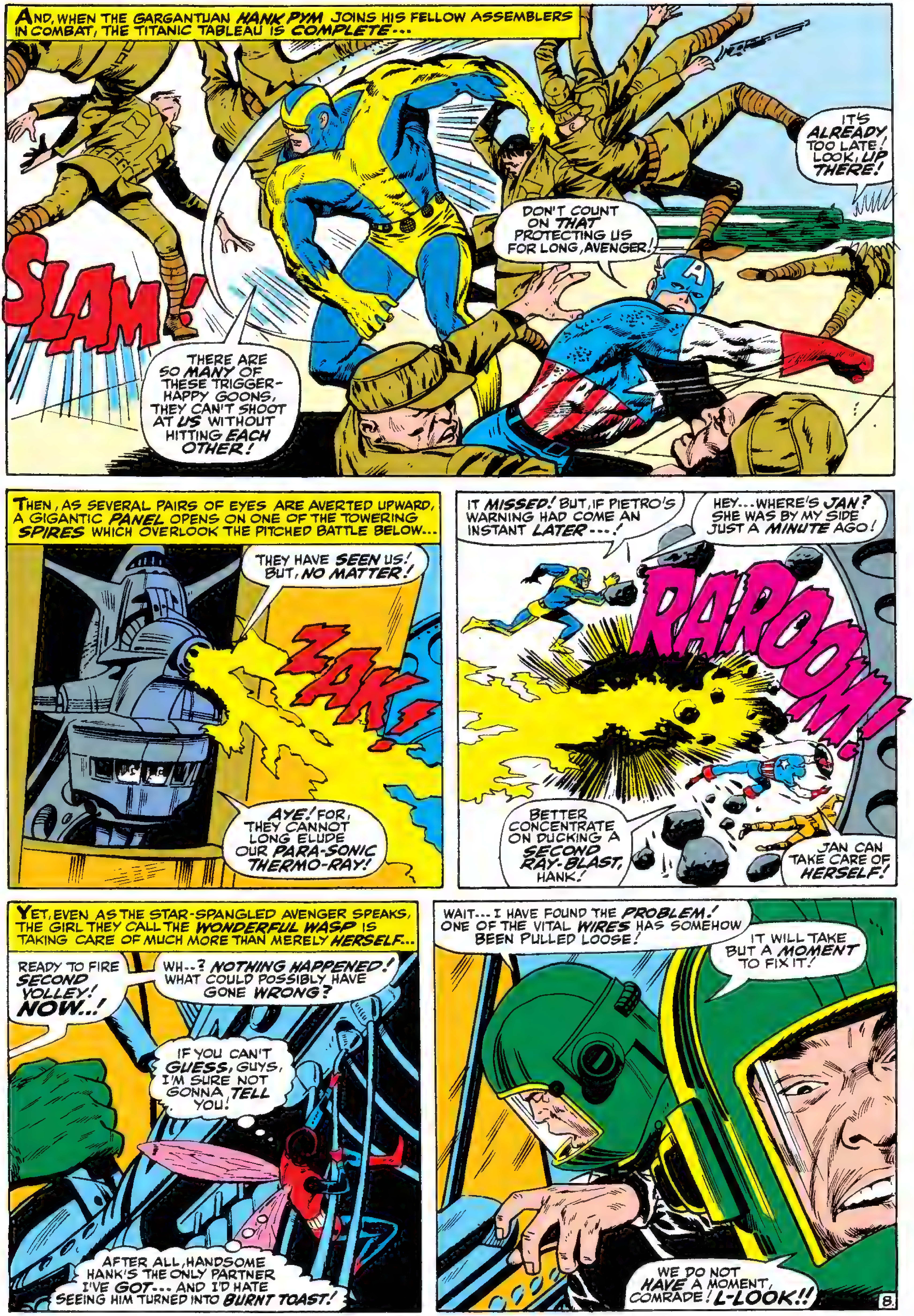

"RIGHT NOW, THE POWERS OF THE PSYCHOTRON ARE LIMITED TO A SINGLE *CHAMBER*! BUT, SOON... VERY SOON -- WE SHALL BE ABLE TO PROJECT IMAGES OF WHATEVER WE *DESIRE* INTO THE VERY *HEARTLAND* OF THE ENEMY..."
A *TIDAL WAVE*... HUNDREDS OF FEET HIGH -- RISING OUT OF *NOWHERE*!!
BUT, WE'RE *MILES* FROM THE SEA! IT... IT ISN'T *POSSIBLE*!!
NOTHING CAN *STOP* THAT THING! WE'RE *DOOMED*.. *DOOMED*!

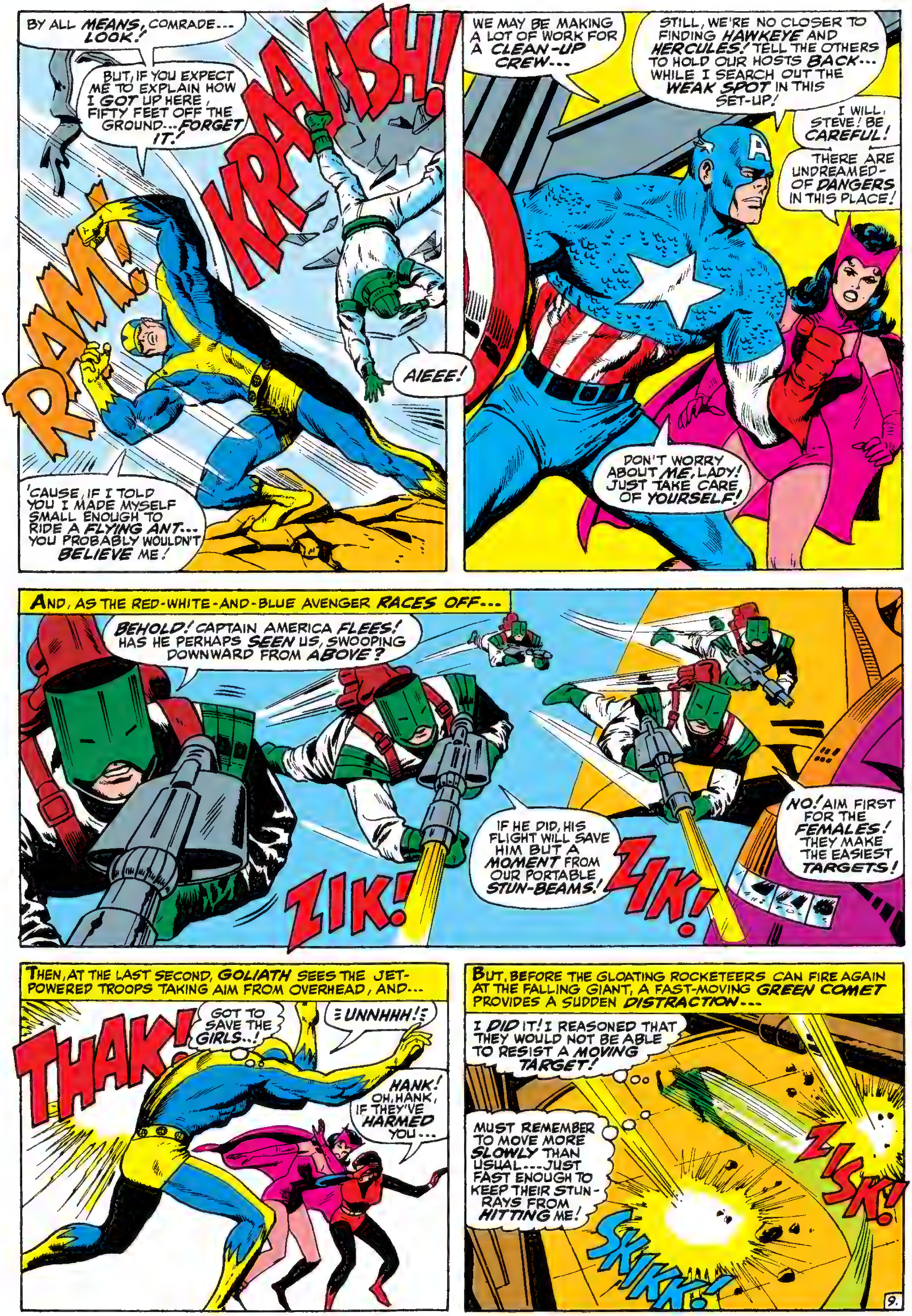

"TERRIFIED.. HELPLESS BEFORE VISIONS OF FIRE, OF FLOOD, OF MECHANIZED WAR-MACHINES TALLER THAN BUILDINGS--- BOTH CITIZENRY AND MILITARY ALIKE WILL FLEE IN STARK PANIC..."
"THEN, USING OUR NEWEST AND MOST DEADLY WEAPONS, IT WILL TAKE MERELY A SMALL, HAND-PICKED FORCE IN EACH COUNTRY TO TAKE POSSESSION OF IT AND ITS VIRTUALLY UNDAMAGED RESOURCES--"
THINK OF IT! AN ENTIRE WORLD SHALL BE OURS... WITHOUT THE INCALCULABLE HAZARDS OF NUCLEAR WAR!
A FEW TONS OF SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, PLACED ON YOUR NATION'S ATOMIC SUBMARINES, AND THIS PLANET SHALL BE OURS!
AH YES... OUR ATOMIC SUBMARINES! PERHAPS YOUR NEED FOR THEM IS THE ONLY REASON YOU HAVE INFORMED US OF THE PSYCHOTRON, EH?
I ASSURE YOU, COMRADE GENERAL...
NEVER MIND! THERE IS STILL ONE THING THAT MAKES ME SKEPTICAL OF YOUR MASTERFUL PLAN, COLONEL...
FOR, WHAT OF MADAME NATASHA... SHE WHO WAS EXPOSED EARLIER TO THE FULL FURY OF THE PSYCHOTRON... YET WAS NOT REDUCED TO THE STARK HELPLESSNESS WHICH YOU PREDICTED?
I ADMIT, COMRADE, THAT WE MUST DO FURTHER STUDY ON HER.. TO LEARN WHY THE TRAITOR STILL POSSESSED ENOUGH STRENGTH OF WILL TO ATTEMPT AN ESCAPE!*
PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE.. I AM NOT A TRAITOR, MY COLONEL!
QUIET, FEMALE! YOUR GUILT IS PROVEN!
BY WHOM, COLONEL? BY A SNIVELING INFORMER FROM WITHIN SHIELD?
I INSIST YOU SUBJECT THE BLACK WIDOW TO A LIE-DETECTOR TEST!
* IT HAPPENED IN ISH #42! ..SUCCINCT STAN.
4.

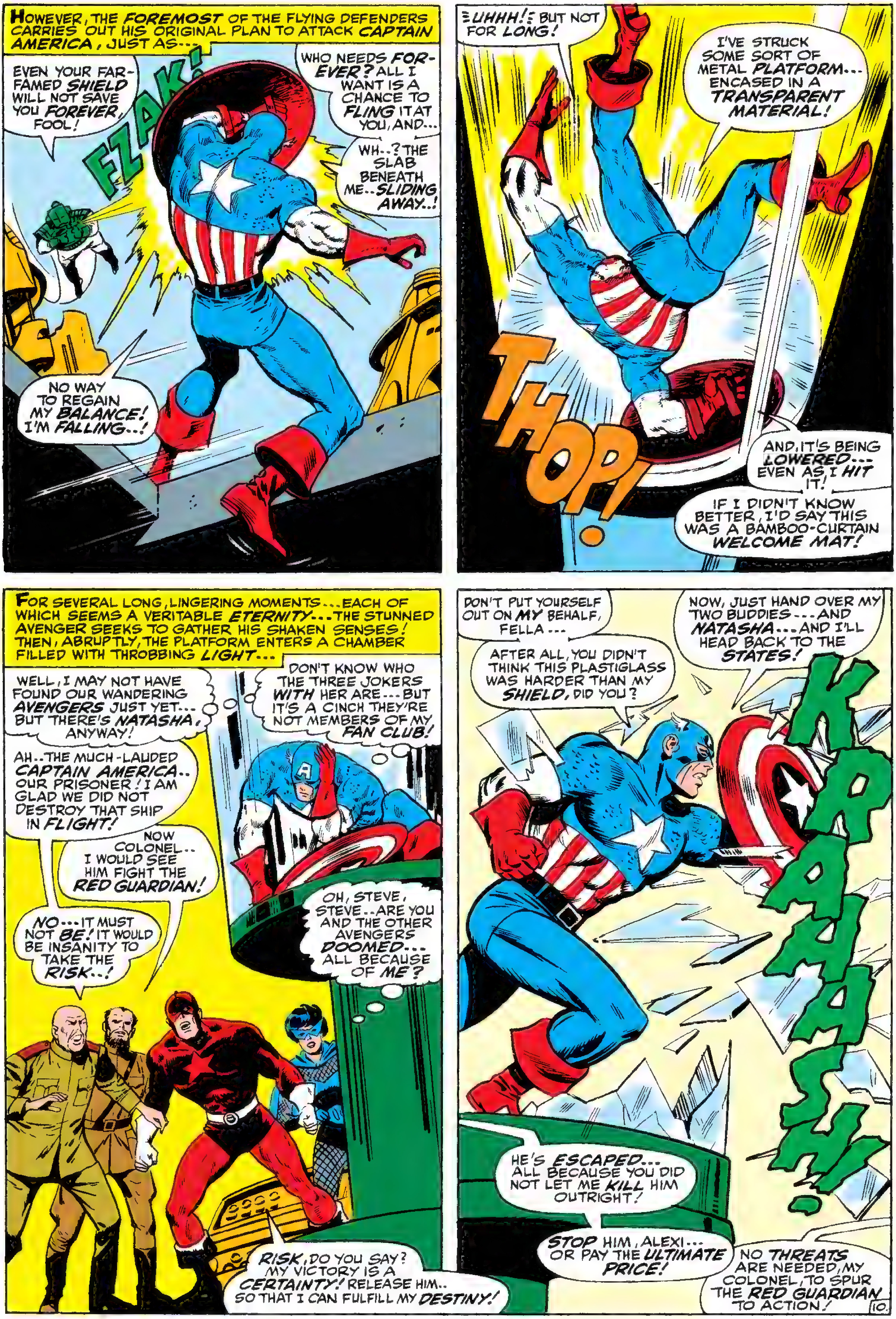

EAGER TO GAIN HIS GUEST'S GOOD WILL... TO SAY NOTHING OF HIS A-SUB FLEET... THE BASE COMMANDER CALLS FOR AN ADVANCED POLYGRAPH, ONLY TO FIND...
IT IS BEYOND BELIEF!
THE MACHINE SAYS SHE SPEAKS THE TRUTH WHEN SHE DENIES BEING A TRAITOR--- THAT SHE IS LOYAL TO OUR NATIONS!
HAVE I NOT ALWAYS CLAIMED SO?
THEN, SHE MUST BE FREED... AT ONCE!
THUS, SCANT MOMENTS LATER...
NOW, COLONEL, PERHAPS YOU WILL WISH TO LOOK AT THE AMERICAN SUB-PLANS I STOLE!
I SENSED FROM THE START, MY BELOVED NATASHA, THAT YOU WOULD NEVER TRULY BETRAY US!
THOUGH I TAUNTED YOU BEFORE, NOW ONCE AGAIN WILL I BE HAPPY TO CALL YOU.. MY WIFE!
VERY TOUCHING! BUT, YOU MENTIONED SUBMARINE PLANS..?
WE TOOK THEM FROM HER WHEN SHE ARRIVED, COMRADE...
WE WERE INFORMED THAT THEY WERE OBSOLETE! BUT NOW, WE SHALL EXAMINE THEM CLOSELY--- ALL OF US!
COLONEL LING STILL DOES NOT FULLY TRUST ME! BUT, HE WILL SOON LEARN JUST HOW TRULY I SPOKE!
AH, WHAT A TEAM WE SHALL MAKE WITH OUR PRESENT POWERS, NATASHA--- THE INVINCIBLE RED GUARDIAN AND THE BEAUTEOUS BLACK WIDOW!
MY ONLY REGRET WILL BE IF I AM DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE MYSELF IN COMBAT AGAINST CAPTAIN AMERICA!
AND, AS THE INCONGRUOUS FOURSOME DEPART...
TALK ABOUT BEIN' MIXED UP! I GOT MYSELF CAPTURED BECAUSE I THOUGHT NATASHA WAS ON OUR SIDE! BUT NOW...
NO! I WON'T EVEN THINK IT! I'VE GOT TO TRUST HER.. I'VE GOT TO!
EITHER WAY, THOUGH, IT LOOKS LIKE CURTAINS FOR HAWKEYE! I JUST HOPE THAT THE OTHER AVENGERS STAY OUTTA THIS!
BUT, UNKNOWN TO THE ARCHER, HE IS TO BE DENIED HIS FONDEST WISH... AND THE RED GUARDIAN TO RECEIVE HIS.. FOR..
WELL, THAT MUST BE THE PLACE, CAP! AT LEAST, ACCORDING TO OUR INSTRUMENTS!
BUT, HAWKEYE DIDN'T WANT US TO FOLLOW HIM! SO, WHY DID HE ACTIVATE THE HOMING SIGNAL THAT LED US HERE?
MAYBE IT WAS HERCULES WHO DID IT, HANK!
JAN COULD BE RIGHT, GOLIATH! YET, SOMEHOW...
OH WELL, WE'LL WORRY ABOUT SUCH ACADEMIC POINTS LATER! RIGHT NOW, I'M TAKING THIS SUPER-SONIC KIDDIE-CAR IN FOR A LANDING!

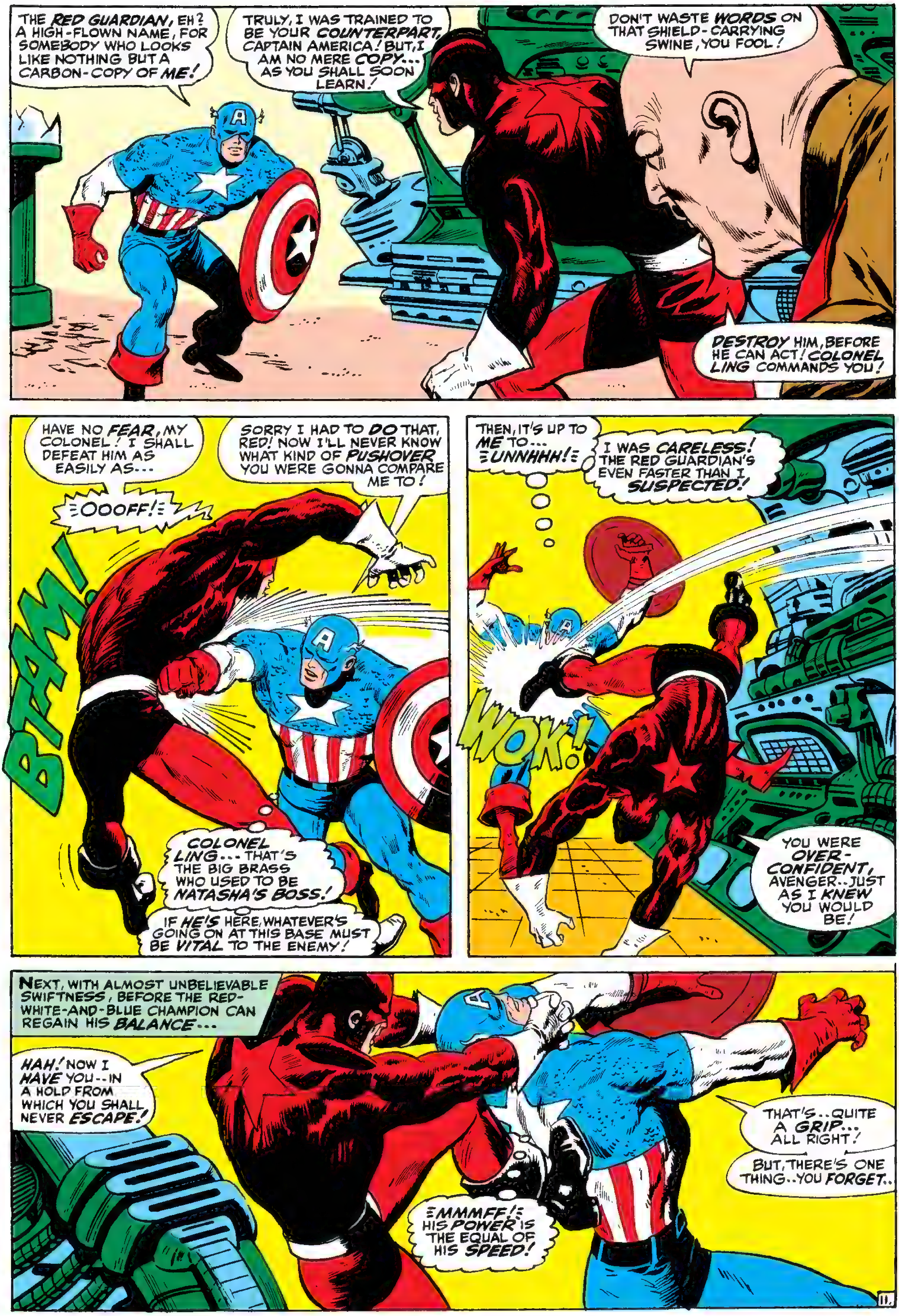

THEN, WITH FLAWLESS PRECISION, STEVE ROGERS GUIDES THE AERO-CAR DOWN INTO THE CENTER OF THE FUTURISTIC COMPLEX...
WHOEVER BUILT THIS BASE IS BOUND TO BE AWARE OF US BY RADAR!
SO, NO USE WASTING TIME WITH A SNEAK ATTACK!
JUST THE SAME, I WONDER WHY THEY LET US LAND IN THE FIRST PLACE!
YET, IF THE ONE CALLED GOLIATH COULD ONLY PEER MOMENTARILY BENEATH THE VERY SPOT ON WHICH HE STANDS, HE WOULD SOON HAVE HIS ANSWER---
THE BLASTER-CANNON IS IN READINESS!
AND, OUR VISITORS ARE INDEED THE MIGHTY AVENGERS---AS OUR COLONEL PREDICTED!
BEGIN THE ATTACK... NOW!!
THE NEXT INSTANT...
KREEEEEEEK!
THAT SECTION OF THE SURFACE IS OPENING--- POWERED BY SOME MAMMOTH MECHANISM!
IT'S JUST AS WE SUSPECTED! WE'VE WALKED INTO SOME SORT OF TRAP!
BUT, WHEN THOSE CAUGHT IN THE TRAP ARE AVENGERS, THE HUNTERS HAVE A WAY OF BECOMING THE HUNTED!
WAIT! SOMETHING'S RISING FROM BELOW..!
LOOK OUT! IT'S SOME KIND OF FANTASTIC, LETHAL CANNON!
GET BACK-- IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIVES!
AND, EVEN AS THE COLORFUL QUINTET DUCK BEHIND A NEARBY CORNER ---
WRAKK!
GOOD SHOW, CAP! ANOTHER SECOND, AND THOSE SLABS WOULD'VE COME DOWN ON US!
ALL OF WHICH GIVES ME A GREAT IDEA!
WANDA, I THINK IT'S HIGH TIME YOU USED YOUR HEX POWER AGAIN!

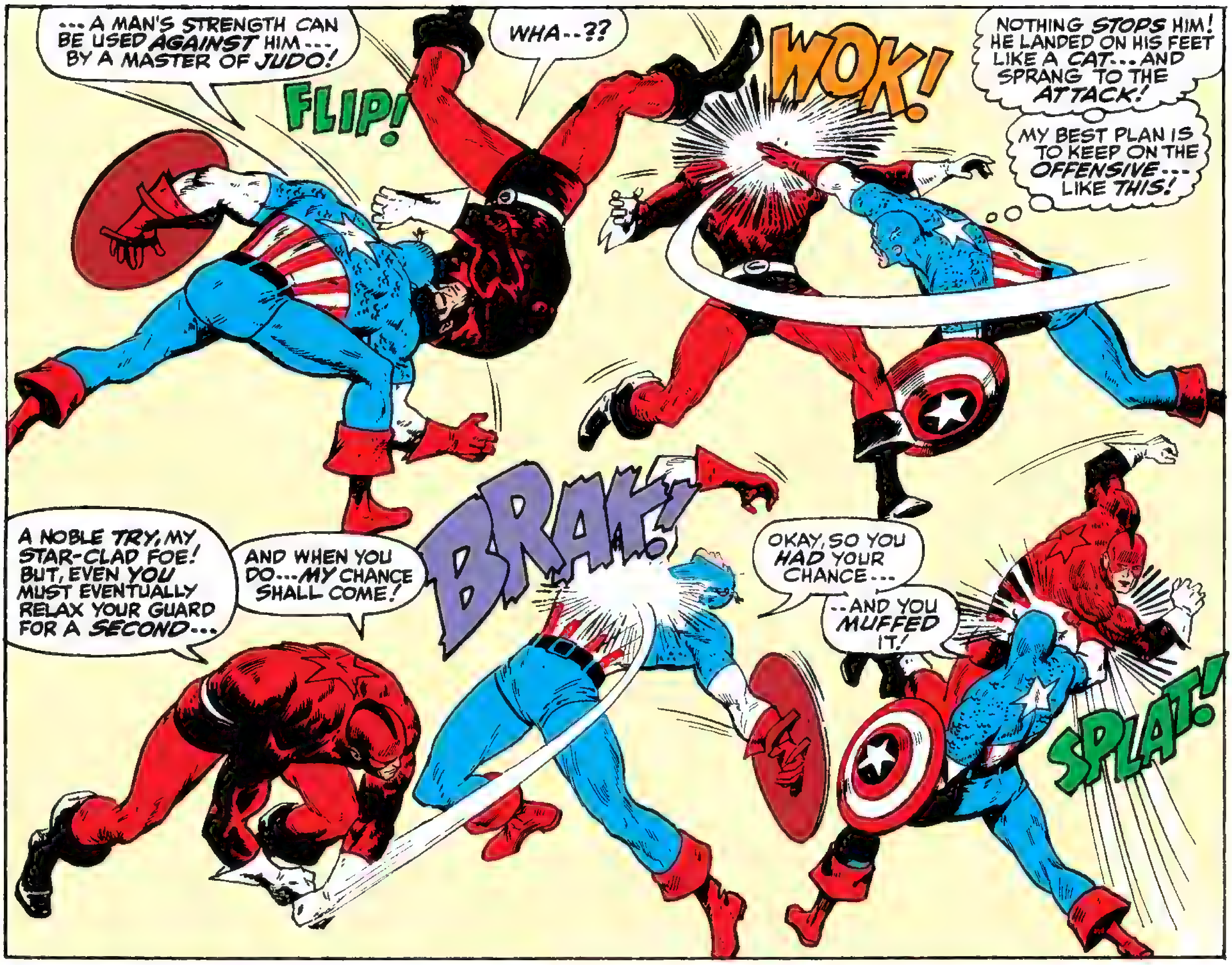

AS DO I, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
WATCH...AS I DIRECT IT AGAINST THE CONCRETE WALL BEHIND OUR ATTACKERS...
...CALLING DOWN UPON THEM THE VERY FATE THEY HAD INTENDED FOR US!
AND, IF YOU CAN'T GUESS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, TIGER, YOU'RE NO TRUE KEEPER OF THE FLAME IN OUR BOOK...
THE WALL COMES CRASHING DOWN UPON US!
THOOOM!
THE CANNON IS WRECKED! WE ARE DEFEATED!
BUT, ONE RAY-GUN DOES NOT AN ATTACK MAKE! AND SO, FROM A DOZEN DIRECTIONS AT ONCE...
STOP THE INTRUDERS! CAPTURE THEM ALIVE IF YOU CAN--BUT STOP THEM!
THE AMERICANS MUST NEVER ESCAPE TO TELL OTHERS WHAT THEY HAVE SEEN HERE!
IT SHALL BE DONE!
WHOOSH!
WHO SAYS I WANT TO TELL ANYBODY ABOUT THIS PLACE, MISTER?
AFTER ALL, YOU CLOWNS AREN'T EXACTLY SCENIC WONDERS!
THAKKAWAM!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, CAP!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE SHOULD BE PROCLAIMED CULTURE HEROES JUST FOR MOWING THEM DOWN!

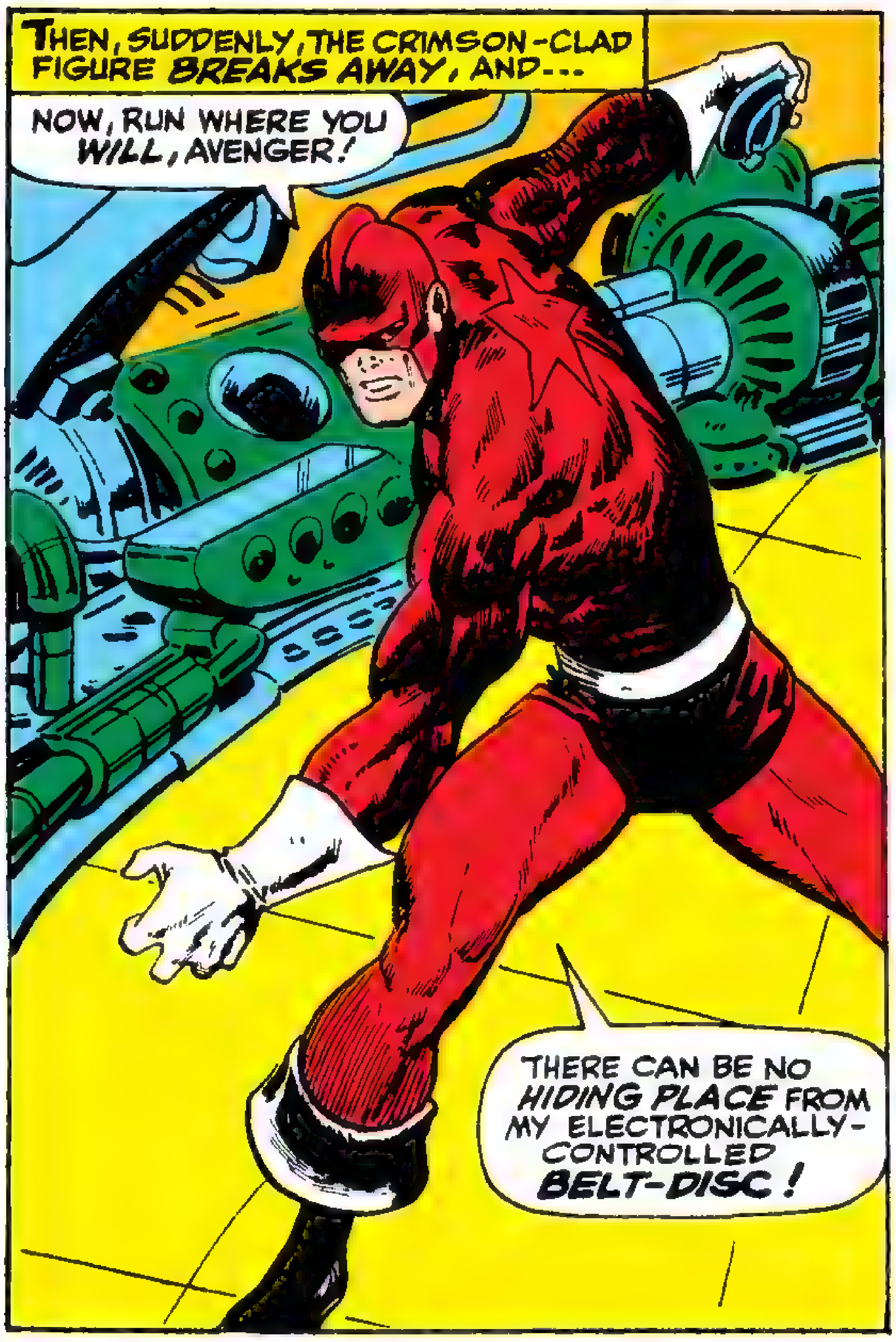

AND, WHEN THE GARGANTUAN HANK PYM JOINS HIS FELLOW ASSEMBLERS IN COMBAT, THE TITANIC TABLEAU IS COMPLETE...
SLAM!
THERE ARE SO MANY OF THESE TRIGGER-HAPPY GOONS, THEY CAN'T SHOOT AT US WITHOUT HITTING EACH OTHER!
DON'T COUNT ON THAT PROTECTING US FOR LONG, AVENGER!
IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE! LOOK, UP THERE!
THEN, AS SEVERAL PAIRS OF EYES ARE AVERTED UPWARD, A GIGANTIC PANEL OPENS ON ONE OF THE TOWERING SPIRES WHICH OVERLOOK THE PITCHED BATTLE BELOW...
THEY HAVE SEEN US! BUT, NO MATTER!
ZAK!
AYE! FOR, THEY CANNOT LONG ELUDE OUR PARA-SONIC THERMO-RAY!
IT MISSED! BUT, IF PIETRO'S WARNING HAD COME AN INSTANT LATER---!
HEY...WHERE'S JAN? SHE WAS BY MY SIDE JUST A MINUTE AGO!
RAROOM!
BETTER CONCENTRATE ON DUCKING A SECOND RAY-BLAST, HANK!
JAN CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF!
YET, EVEN AS THE STAR-SPANGLED AVENGER SPEAKS, THE GIRL THEY CALL THE WONDERFUL WASP IS TAKING CARE OF MUCH MORE THAN MERELY HERSELF...
READY TO FIRE SECOND VOLLEY! NOW..!
WH--? NOTHING HAPPENED! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HAVE GONE WRONG?
IF YOU CAN'T GUESS, GUYS, I'M SURE NOT GONNA TELL YOU!
AFTER ALL, HANDSOME HANK'S THE ONLY PARTNER I'VE GOT... AND I'D HATE SEEING HIM TURNED INTO BURNT TOAST!
WAIT... I HAVE FOUND THE PROBLEM! ONE OF THE VITAL WIRES HAS SOMEHOW BEEN PULLED LOOSE!
IT WILL TAKE BUT A MOMENT TO FIX IT!
WE DO NOT HAVE A MOMENT, COMRADE! L-LOOK!!
8.

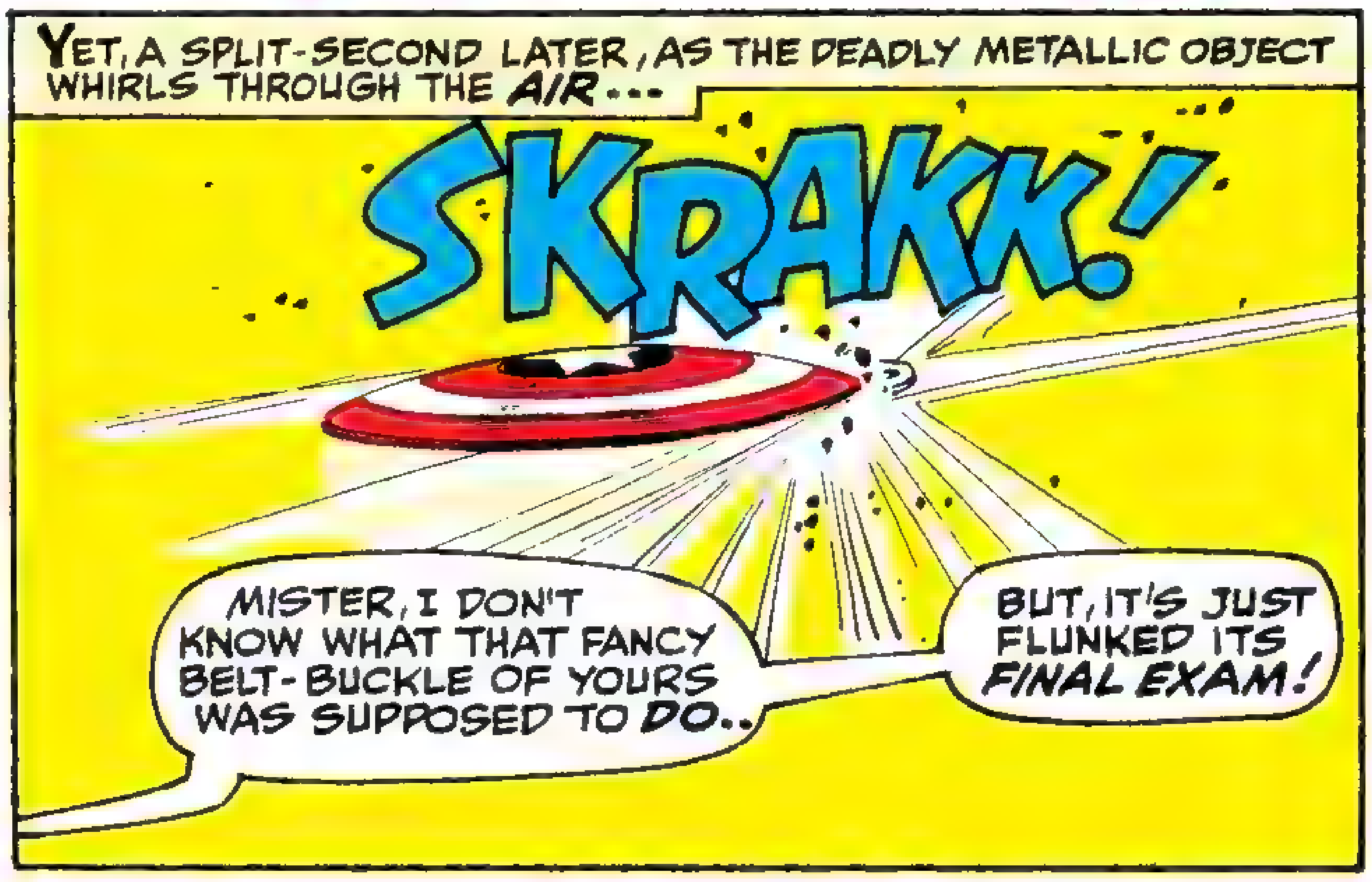

BY ALL MEANS, COMRADE... LOOK!
BUT, IF YOU EXPECT ME TO EXPLAIN HOW I GOT UP HERE, FIFTY FEET OFF THE GROUND... FORGET IT!
KRAAASH!
RAM!
AIEEE!
'CAUSE, IF I TOLD YOU I MADE MYSELF SMALL ENOUGH TO RIDE A FLYING ANT... YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME!
WE MAY BE MAKING A LOT OF WORK FOR A CLEAN-UP CREW...
STILL, WE'RE NO CLOSER TO FINDING HAWKEYE AND HERCULES! TELL THE OTHERS TO HOLD OUR HOSTS BACK... WHILE I SEARCH OUT THE WEAK SPOT IN THIS SET-UP!
I WILL, STEVE! BE CAREFUL!
THERE ARE UNDREAMED-OF DANGERS IN THIS PLACE!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, LADY! JUST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!
AND, AS THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER RACES OFF...
BEHOLD! CAPTAIN AMERICA FLEES! HAS HE PERHAPS SEEN US, SWOOPING DOWNWARD FROM ABOVE?
IF HE DID, HIS FLIGHT WILL SAVE HIM BUT A MOMENT FROM OUR PORTABLE STUN-BEAMS!
ZIK!
ZIK!
NO! AIM FIRST FOR THE FEMALES! THEY MAKE THE EASIEST TARGETS!
THEN, AT THE LAST SECOND, GOLIATH SEES THE JET-POWERED TROOPS TAKING AIM FROM OVERHEAD, AND...
THAK!
GOT TO SAVE THE GIRLS..!
UNNHHH!
HANK! OH, HANK, IF THEY'VE HARMED YOU...
BUT, BEFORE THE GLOATING ROCKETEERS CAN FIRE AGAIN AT THE FALLING GIANT, A FAST-MOVING GREEN COMET PROVIDES A SUDDEN DISTRACTION...
I DID IT! I REASONED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST A MOVING TARGET!
MUST REMEMBER TO MOVE MORE SLOWLY THAN USUAL... JUST FAST ENOUGH TO KEEP THEIR STUN-RAYS FROM HITTING ME!
ZISK!
SKIKK!

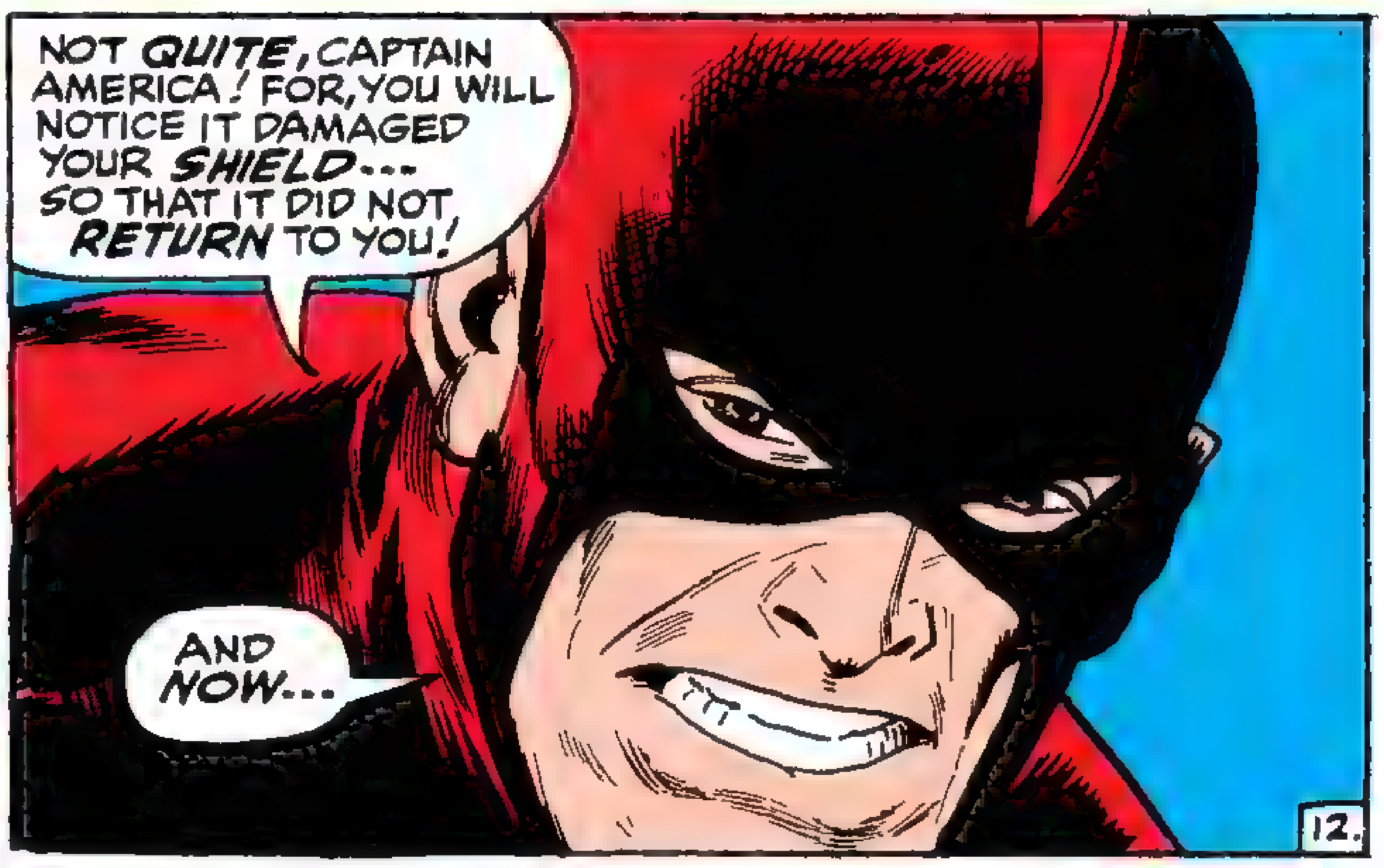

HOWEVER, THE FOREMOST OF THE FLYING DEFENDERS CARRIES OUT HIS ORIGINAL PLAN TO ATTACK CAPTAIN AMERICA, JUST AS...
EVEN YOUR FAR-FAMED SHIELD WILL NOT SAVE YOU FOREVER, FOOL!
FZAK!
WHO NEEDS FOREVER? ALL I WANT IS A CHANCE TO FLING IT AT YOU, AND...
WH..? THE SLAB BENEATH ME..SLIDING AWAY..!
NO WAY TO REGAIN MY BALANCE! I'M FALLING..!
UHHH! BUT NOT FOR LONG!
I'VE STRUCK SOME SORT OF METAL PLATFORM... ENCASED IN A TRANSPARENT MATERIAL!
THOP!
AND, IT'S BEING LOWERED... EVEN AS I HIT IT!
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY THIS WAS A BAMBOO-CURTAIN WELCOME MAT!
FOR SEVERAL LONG, LINGERING MOMENTS...EACH OF WHICH SEEMS A VERITABLE ETERNITY...THE STUNNED AVENGER SEEKS TO GATHER HIS SHAKEN SENSES! THEN, ABRUPTLY, THE PLATFORM ENTERS A CHAMBER FILLED WITH THROBBING LIGHT...
WELL, I MAY NOT HAVE FOUND OUR WANDERING AVENGERS JUST YET... BUT THERE'S NATASHA, ANYWAY!
DON'T KNOW WHO THE THREE JOKERS WITH HER ARE... BUT IT'S A CINCH THEY'RE NOT MEMBERS OF MY FAN CLUB!
AH..THE MUCH-LAUDED CAPTAIN AMERICA.. OUR PRISONER! I AM GLAD WE DID NOT DESTROY THAT SHIP IN FLIGHT!
NOW COLONEL.. I WOULD SEE HIM FIGHT THE RED GUARDIAN!
NO...IT MUST NOT BE! IT WOULD BE INSANITY TO TAKE THE RISK..!
OH, STEVE, STEVE..ARE YOU AND THE OTHER AVENGERS DOOMED... ALL BECAUSE OF ME?
RISK, DO YOU SAY? MY VICTORY IS A CERTAINTY! RELEASE HIM.. SO THAT I CAN FULFILL MY DESTINY!
DON'T PUT YOURSELF OUT ON MY BEHALF, FELLA...
AFTER ALL, YOU DIDN'T THINK THIS PLASTIGLASS WAS HARDER THAN MY SHIELD, DID YOU?
NOW, JUST HAND OVER MY TWO BUDDIES...AND NATASHA...AND I'LL HEAD BACK TO THE STATES!
KRAAAASH!
HE'S ESCAPED... ALL BECAUSE YOU DID NOT LET ME KILL HIM OUTRIGHT!
STOP HIM, ALEXI... OR PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE!
NO THREATS ARE NEEDED, MY COLONEL, TO SPUR THE RED GUARDIAN TO ACTION!

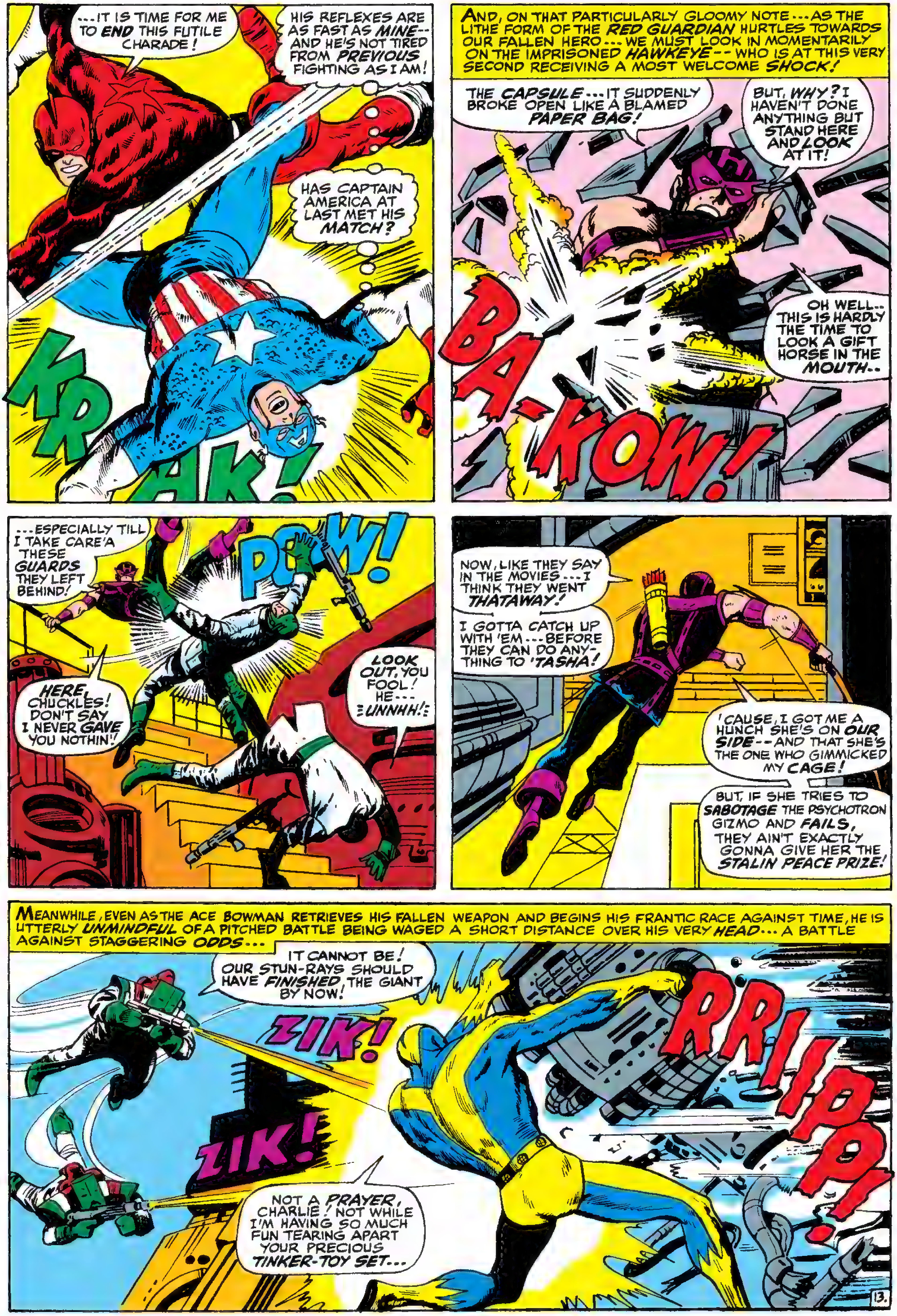

THE RED GUARDIAN, EH? A HIGH-FLOWN NAME, FOR SOMEBODY WHO LOOKS LIKE NOTHING BUT A CARBON-COPY OF ME!
TRULY, I WAS TRAINED TO BE YOUR COUNTERPART, CAPTAIN AMERICA! BUT, I AM NO MERE COPY... AS YOU SHALL SOON LEARN!
DON'T WASTE WORDS ON THAT SHIELD-CARRYING SWINE, YOU FOOL!
DESTROY HIM, BEFORE HE CAN ACT! COLONEL LING COMMANDS YOU!
HAVE NO FEAR, MY COLONEL! I SHALL DEFEAT HIM AS EASILY AS...
OOOFF!
SORRY I HAD TO DO THAT, RED! NOW I'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT KIND OF PUSHOVER YOU WERE GONNA COMPARE ME TO!
BTAM!
COLONEL LING... THAT'S THE BIG BRASS WHO USED TO BE NATASHA'S BOSS!
IF HE'S HERE, WHATEVER'S GOING ON AT THIS BASE MUST BE VITAL TO THE ENEMY!
THEN, IT'S UP TO ME TO... UNNHHH!
I WAS CARELESS! THE RED GUARDIAN'S EVEN FASTER THAN I SUSPECTED!
WOK!
YOU WERE OVER-CONFIDENT, AVENGER.. JUST AS I KNEW YOU WOULD BE!
NEXT, WITH ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE SWIFTNESS, BEFORE THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE CHAMPION CAN REGAIN HIS BALANCE...
HAH! NOW I HAVE YOU--IN A HOLD FROM WHICH YOU SHALL NEVER ESCAPE!
THAT'S.. QUITE A GRIP... ALL RIGHT!
BUT, THERE'S ONE THING.. YOU FORGET..
MMMFF! HIS POWER IS THE EQUAL OF HIS SPEED!

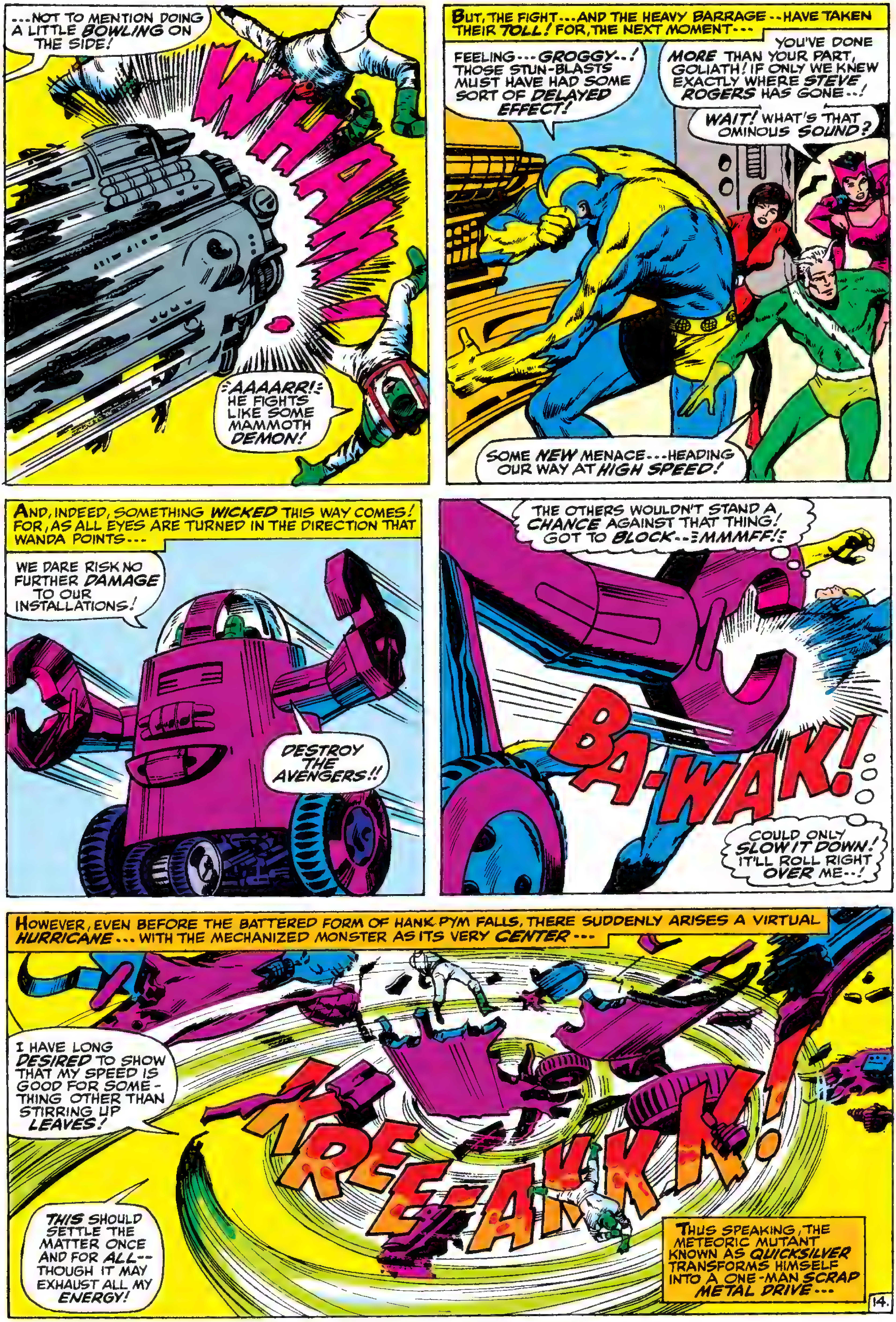

...A MAN'S STRENGTH CAN BE USED *AGAINST* HIM... BY A MASTER OF *JUDO!*
FLIP!
WHA--??
WOK!
NOTHING *STOPS* HIM! HE LANDED ON HIS FEET LIKE A *CAT*...AND SPRANG TO THE *ATTACK!*
MY BEST PLAN IS TO KEEP ON THE *OFFENSIVE*... LIKE *THIS!*
A NOBLE *TRY*, MY STAR-CLAD FOE! BUT, EVEN *YOU* MUST EVENTUALLY RELAX YOUR GUARD FOR A *SECOND*...
AND WHEN YOU DO...*MY* CHANCE SHALL COME!
BRAK!
OKAY, SO YOU *HAD* YOUR CHANCE...
--AND YOU *MUFFED* IT!
SPLAT!

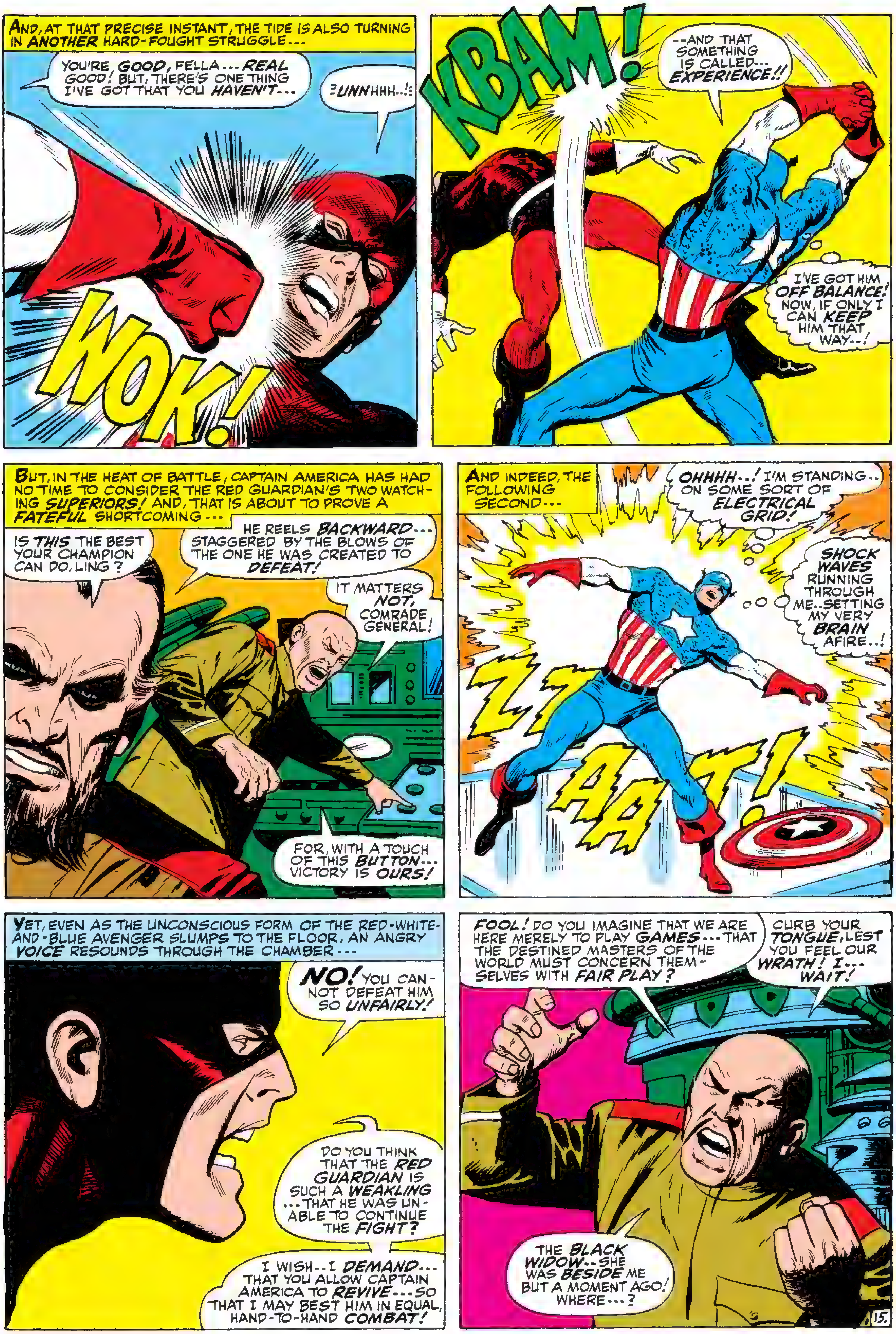

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE CRIMSON-CLAD FIGURE *BREAKS AWAY*, AND---
NOW, RUN WHERE YOU *WILL*, AVENGER!
THERE CAN BE NO *HIDING PLACE* FROM MY ELECTRONICALLY-CONTROLLED *BELT-DISC!*

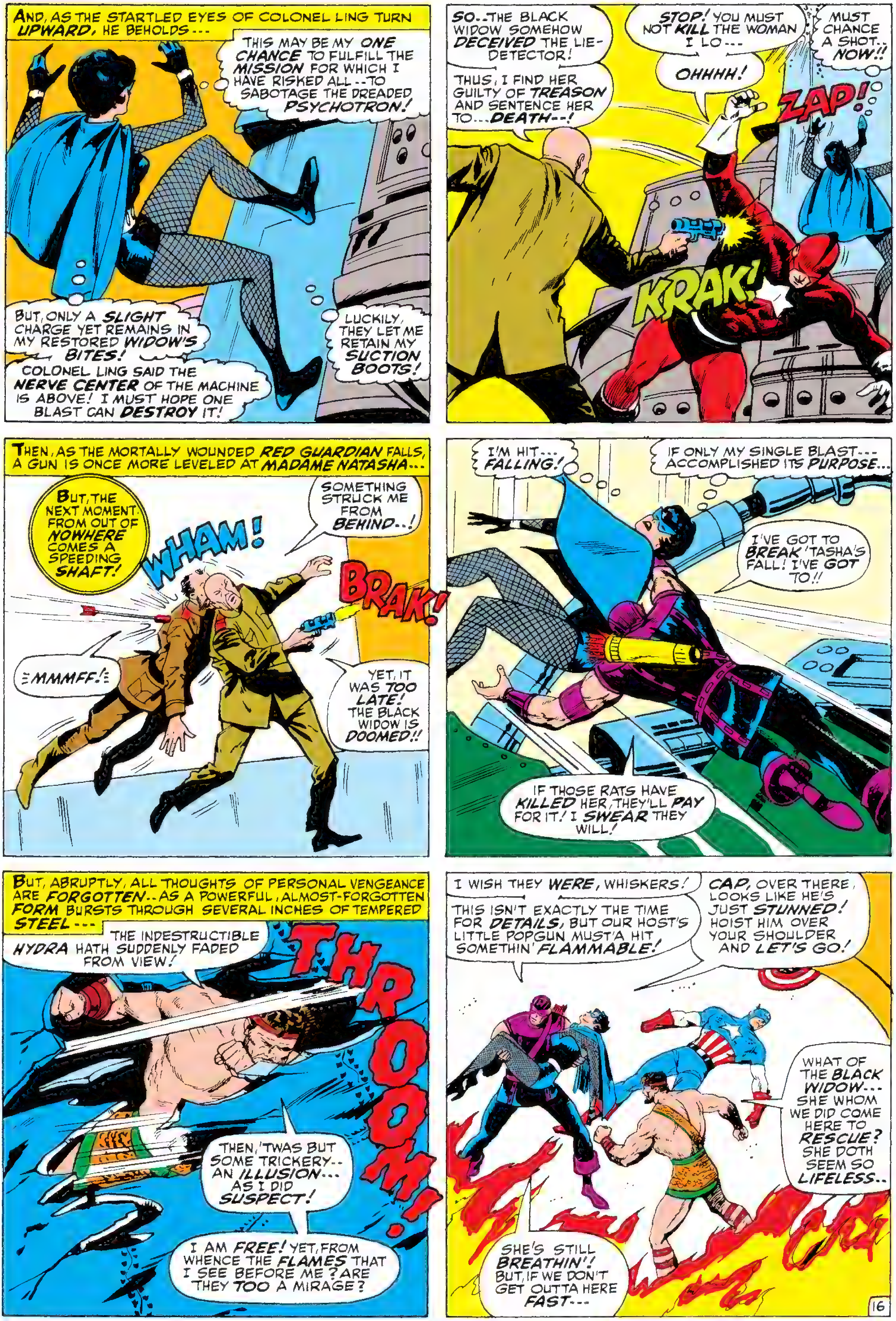

YET, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, AS THE DEADLY METALLIC OBJECT WHIRLS THROUGH THE *AIR*...
SKRAKK!
MISTER, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT FANCY BELT-BUCKLE OF YOURS WAS SUPPOSED TO *DO*..
BUT, IT'S JUST FLUNKED ITS *FINAL EXAM!*

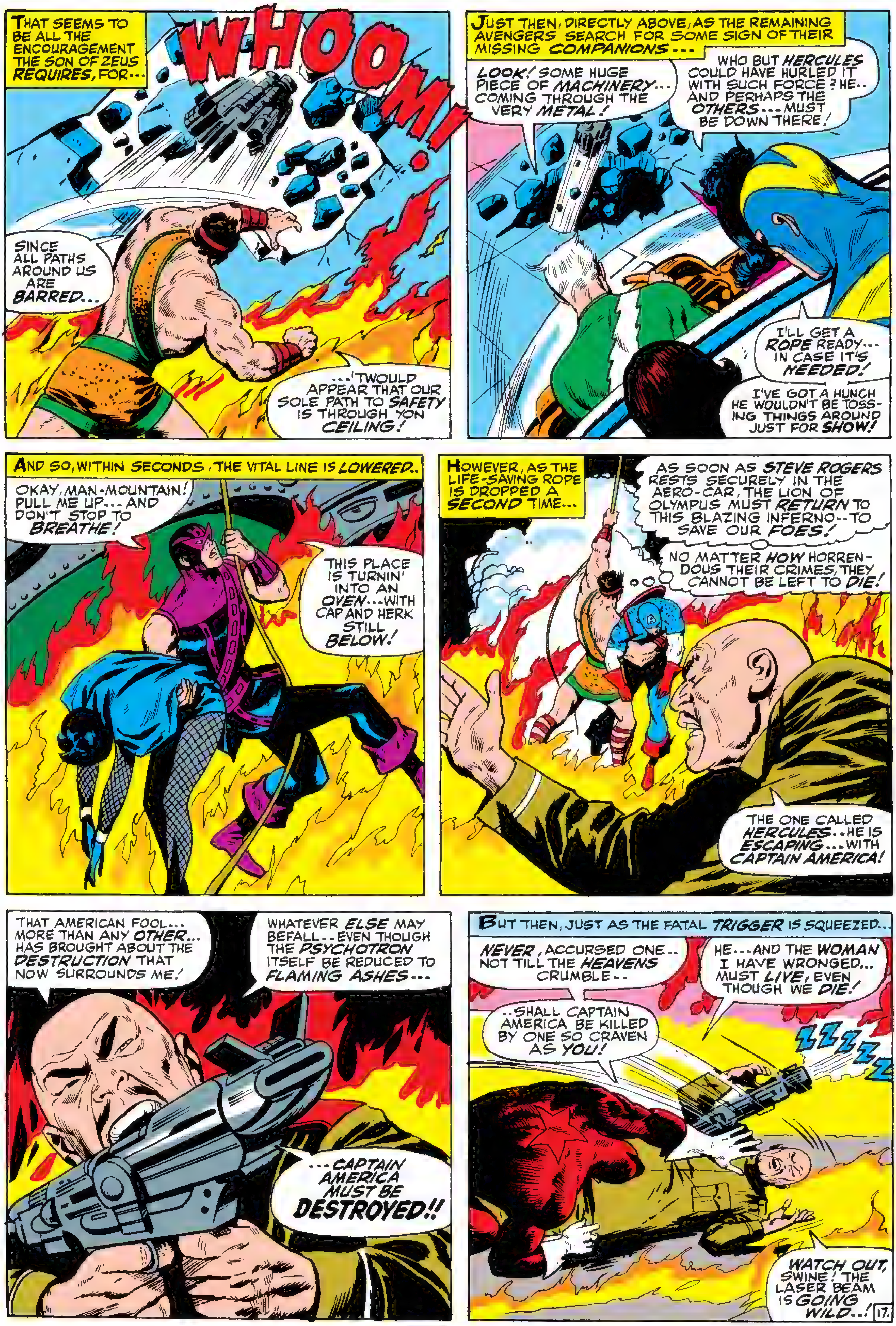

NOT *QUITE*, CAPTAIN AMERICA! FOR, YOU WILL NOTICE IT DAMAGED YOUR *SHIELD*... SO THAT IT DID NOT *RETURN* TO YOU!
AND *NOW*...

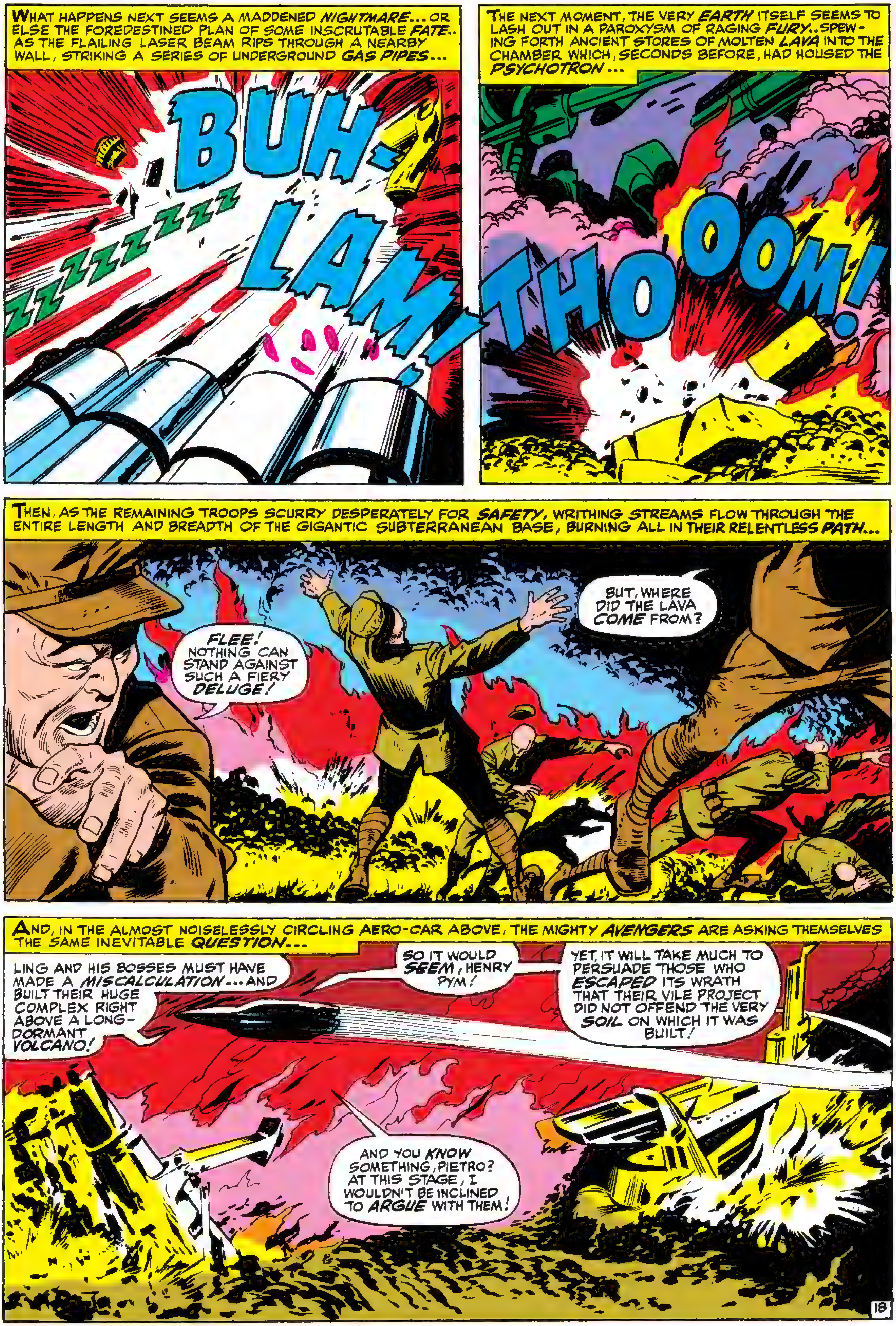

...IT IS TIME FOR ME TO *END* THIS FUTILE CHARADE!
HIS REFLEXES ARE AS FAST AS *MINE*-- AND HE'S NOT TIRED FROM *PREVIOUS* FIGHTING AS I AM!
HAS CAPTAIN AMERICA AT LAST MET HIS *MATCH?*
KRAK!
AND, ON THAT PARTICULARLY GLOOMY NOTE...AS THE LITHE FORM OF THE *RED GUARDIAN* HURTLES TOWARDS OUR FALLEN HERO... WE MUST LOOK IN MOMENTARILY ON THE IMPRISONED *HAWKEYE*-- WHO IS AT THIS VERY SECOND RECEIVING A MOST WELCOME *SHOCK!*
THE *CAPSULE*... IT SUDDENLY BROKE OPEN LIKE A BLAMED *PAPER BAG!*
BUT, *WHY?* I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING BUT STAND HERE AND *LOOK* AT IT!
BA-KOW!
OH WELL.. THIS IS HARDLY THE TIME TO LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE *MOUTH*..
...ESPECIALLY TILL I TAKE CARE'A THESE *GUARDS* THEY LEFT BEHIND!
POW!
HERE, CHUCKLES! DON'T SAY I NEVER *GAVE* YOU NOTHIN'!
LOOK OUT, YOU FOOL! HE--- *UNNHH!*
NOW, LIKE THEY SAY IN THE MOVIES... I THINK THEY WENT *THATAWAY!*
I GOTTA CATCH UP WITH 'EM... BEFORE THEY CAN DO ANYTHING TO *'TASHA!*
'CAUSE, I GOT ME A HUNCH SHE'S ON *OUR SIDE*-- AND THAT SHE'S THE ONE WHO GIMMICKED MY *CAGE!*
BUT, IF SHE TRIES TO *SABOTAGE* THE PSYCHOTRON GIZMO AND *FAILS,* THEY AIN'T EXACTLY GONNA GIVE HER THE *STALIN PEACE PRIZE!*
MEANWHILE, EVEN AS THE ACE BOWMAN RETRIEVES HIS FALLEN WEAPON AND BEGINS HIS FRANTIC RACE AGAINST TIME, HE IS UTTERLY *UNMINDFUL* OF A PITCHED BATTLE BEING WAGED A SHORT DISTANCE OVER HIS VERY *HEAD*... A BATTLE AGAINST STAGGERING *ODDS*...
IT CANNOT BE! OUR STUN-RAYS SHOULD HAVE *FINISHED* THE GIANT BY NOW!
ZIK!
ZIK!
RRIPP!
NOT A *PRAYER,* CHARLIE! NOT WHILE I'M HAVING SO MUCH FUN TEARING APART YOUR PRECIOUS *TINKER-TOY SET*...
13.

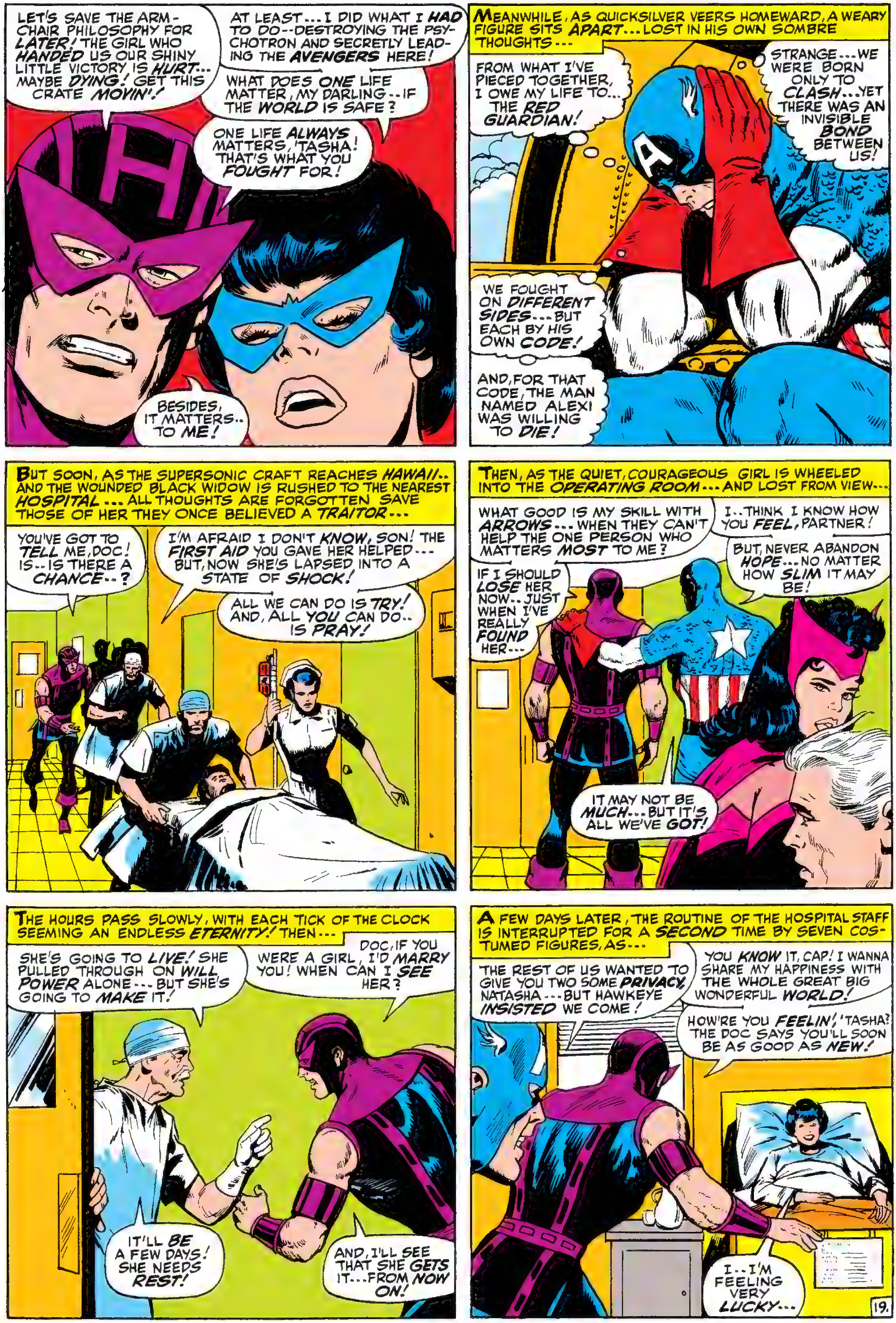

...NOT TO MENTION DOING A LITTLE BOWLING ON THE SIDE!
WHAM!
AAAARR! HE FIGHTS LIKE SOME MAMMOTH DEMON!
BUT, THE FIGHT... AND THE HEAVY BARRAGE -- HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL! FOR, THE NEXT MOMENT---
FEELING--- GROGGY--! THOSE STUN-BLASTS MUST HAVE HAD SOME SORT OF DELAYED EFFECT!
YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN YOUR PART, GOLIATH! IF ONLY WE KNEW EXACTLY WHERE STEVE ROGERS HAS GONE--!
WAIT! WHAT'S THAT OMINOUS SOUND?
SOME NEW MENACE---HEADING OUR WAY AT HIGH SPEED!
AND, INDEED, SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES! FOR, AS ALL EYES ARE TURNED IN THE DIRECTION THAT WANDA POINTS---
WE DARE RISK NO FURTHER DAMAGE TO OUR INSTALLATIONS!
DESTROY THE AVENGERS!!
THE OTHERS WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THAT THING! GOT TO BLOCK-- MMMFF!
BA-WAK!
COULD ONLY SLOW IT DOWN! IT'LL ROLL RIGHT OVER ME--!
HOWEVER, EVEN BEFORE THE BATTERED FORM OF HANK PYM FALLS, THERE SUDDENLY ARISES A VIRTUAL HURRICANE... WITH THE MECHANIZED MONSTER AS ITS VERY CENTER---
I HAVE LONG DESIRED TO SHOW THAT MY SPEED IS GOOD FOR SOMETHING OTHER THAN STIRRING UP LEAVES!
KREE-AKKK!
THIS SHOULD SETTLE THE MATTER ONCE AND FOR ALL-- THOUGH IT MAY EXHAUST ALL MY ENERGY!
THUS SPEAKING, THE METEORIC MUTANT KNOWN AS QUICKSILVER TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO A ONE-MAN SCRAP METAL DRIVE---

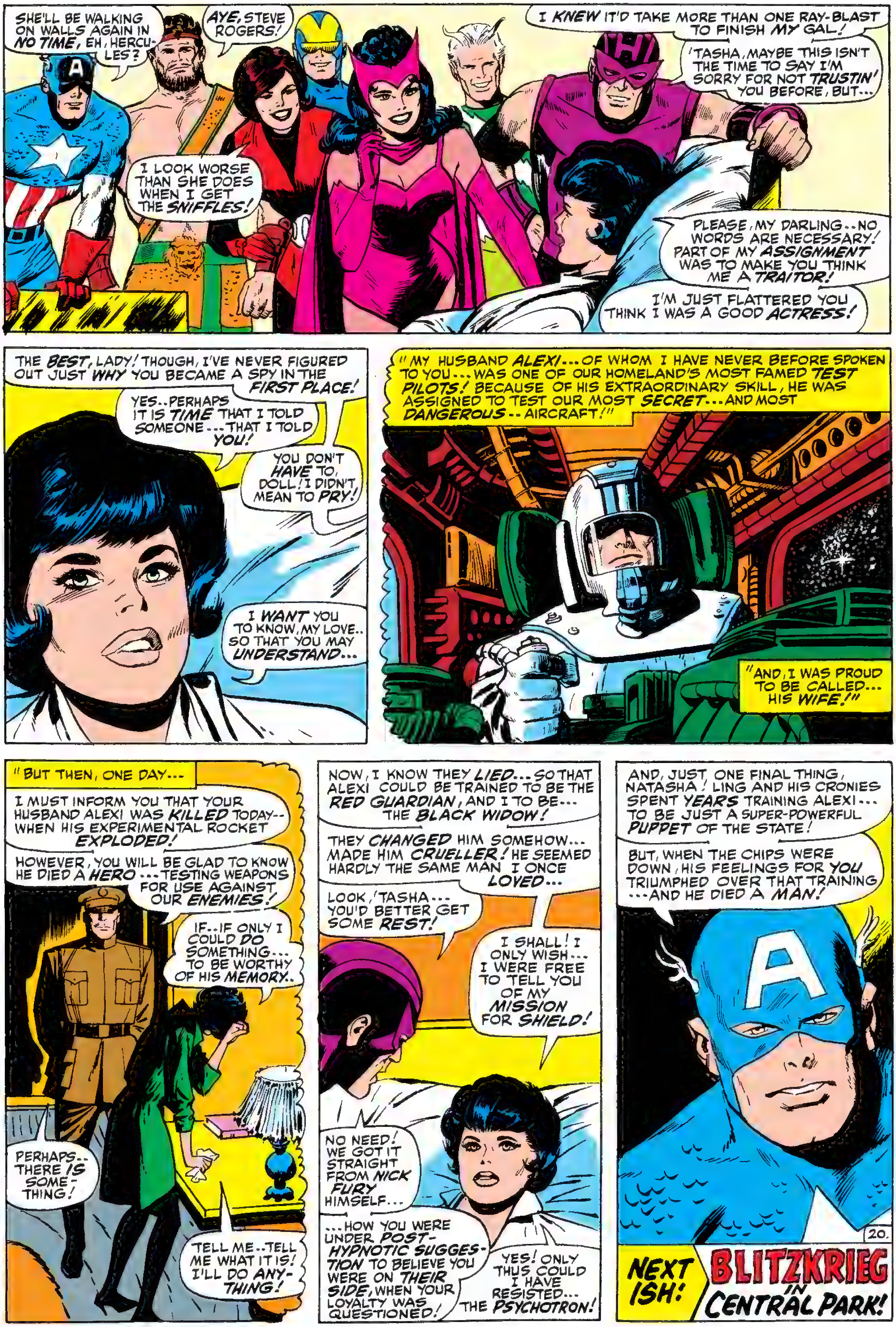

AND, AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT, THE TIDE IS ALSO TURNING IN ANOTHER HARD-FOUGHT STRUGGLE...
YOU'RE GOOD, FELLA...REAL GOOD! BUT, THERE'S ONE THING I'VE GOT THAT YOU HAVEN'T...
UNNHHH..!
WOK!
KBAM!
--AND THAT SOMETHING IS CALLED... EXPERIENCE!!
I'VE GOT HIM OFF BALANCE! NOW, IF ONLY I CAN KEEP HIM THAT WAY--!
BUT, IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS HAD NO TIME TO CONSIDER THE RED GUARDIAN'S TWO WATCHING SUPERIORS! AND, THAT IS ABOUT TO PROVE A FATEFUL SHORTCOMING...
IS THIS THE BEST YOUR CHAMPION CAN DO, LING?
HE REELS BACKWARD... STAGGERED BY THE BLOWS OF THE ONE HE WAS CREATED TO DEFEAT!
IT MATTERS NOT, COMRADE GENERAL!
FOR, WITH A TOUCH OF THIS BUTTON... VICTORY IS OURS!
AND INDEED, THE FOLLOWING SECOND...
OHHHH..! I'M STANDING.. ON SOME SORT OF ELECTRICAL GRID!
SHOCK WAVES RUNNING THROUGH ME..SETTING MY VERY BRAIN AFIRE..!
ZZAAAT!
YET, EVEN AS THE UNCONSCIOUS FORM OF THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR, AN ANGRY VOICE RESOUNDS THROUGH THE CHAMBER...
NO! YOU CANNOT DEFEAT HIM SO UNFAIRLY!
DO YOU THINK THAT THE RED GUARDIAN IS SUCH A WEAKLING...THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT?
I WISH..I DEMAND... THAT YOU ALLOW CAPTAIN AMERICA TO REVIVE...SO THAT I MAY BEST HIM IN EQUAL, HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT!
FOOL! DO YOU IMAGINE THAT WE ARE HERE MERELY TO PLAY GAMES...THAT THE DESTINED MASTERS OF THE WORLD MUST CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH FAIR PLAY?
CURB YOUR TONGUE, LEST YOU FEEL OUR WRATH! I... WAIT!
THE BLACK WIDOW..SHE WAS BESIDE ME BUT A MOMENT AGO! WHERE...?

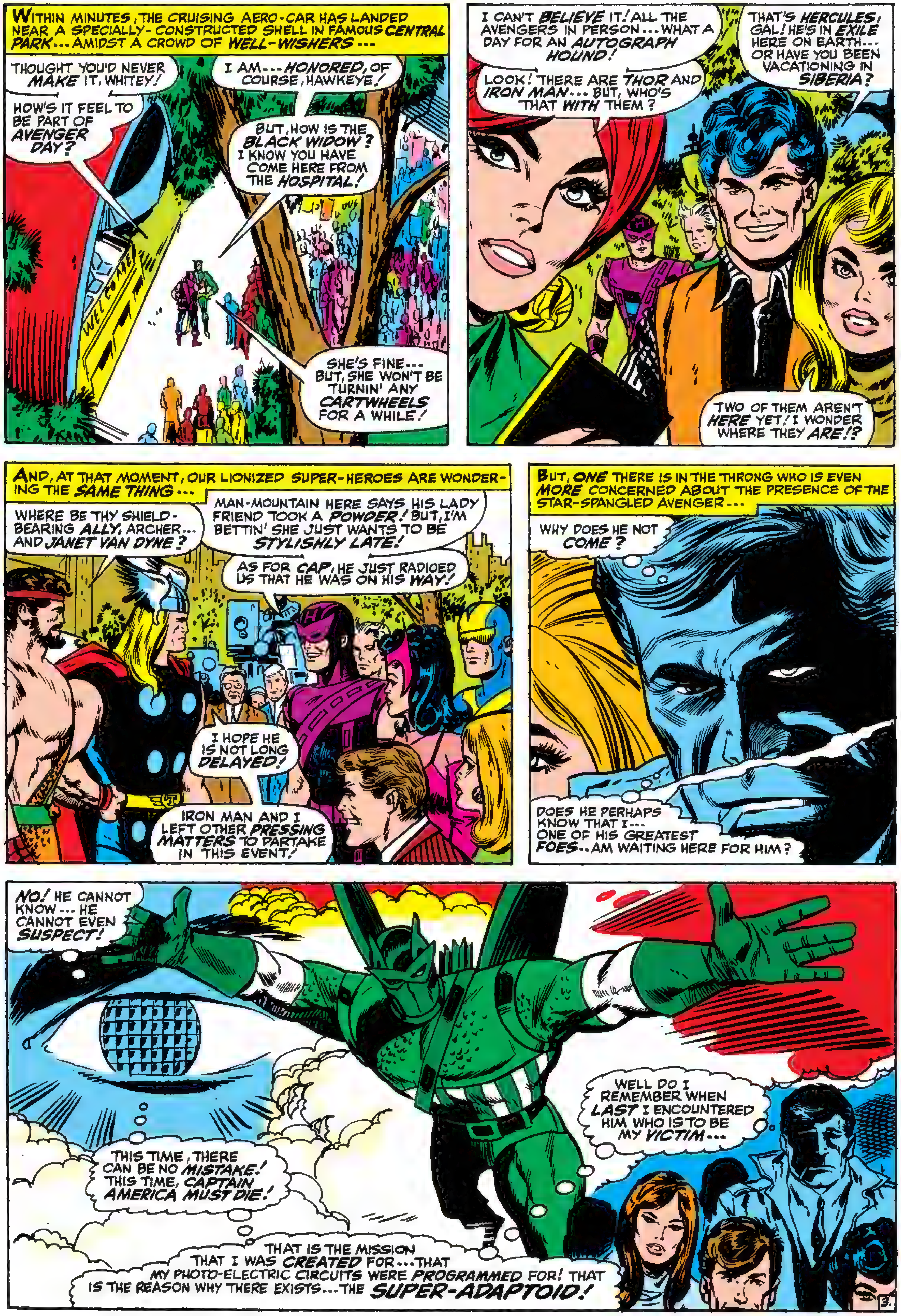

AND, AS THE STARTLED EYES OF COLONEL LING TURN UPWARD, HE BEHOLDS---
THIS MAY BE MY ONE CHANCE TO FULFILL THE MISSION FOR WHICH I HAVE RISKED ALL--TO SABOTAGE THE DREADED PSYCHOTRON!
BUT, ONLY A SLIGHT CHARGE YET REMAINS IN MY RESTORED WIDOW'S BITES!
COLONEL LING SAID THE NERVE CENTER OF THE MACHINE IS ABOVE! I MUST HOPE ONE BLAST CAN DESTROY IT!
LUCKILY, THEY LET ME RETAIN MY SUCTION BOOTS!
SO--THE BLACK WIDOW SOMEHOW DECEIVED THE LIE-DETECTOR!
THUS, I FIND HER GUILTY OF TREASON AND SENTENCE HER TO...DEATH--!
STOP! YOU MUST NOT KILL THE WOMAN I LO---
OHHHH!
MUST CHANCE A SHOT.. NOW!!
ZAP!
KRAK!
THEN, AS THE MORTALLY WOUNDED RED GUARDIAN FALLS, A GUN IS ONCE MORE LEVELED AT MADAME NATASHA...
BUT, THE NEXT MOMENT, FROM OUT OF NOWHERE COMES A SPEEDING SHAFT!
WHAM!
SOMETHING STRUCK ME FROM BEHIND--!
BRAK!
MMMFF!
YET, IT WAS TOO LATE! THE BLACK WIDOW IS DOOMED!!
I'M HIT--- FALLING!
IF ONLY MY SINGLE BLAST--- ACCOMPLISHED ITS PURPOSE...
I'VE GOT TO BREAK 'TASHA'S FALL! I'VE GOT TO!!
IF THOSE RATS HAVE KILLED HER, THEY'LL PAY FOR IT! I SWEAR THEY WILL!
BUT, ABRUPTLY, ALL THOUGHTS OF PERSONAL VENGEANCE ARE FORGOTTEN--AS A POWERFUL, ALMOST-FORGOTTEN FORM BURSTS THROUGH SEVERAL INCHES OF TEMPERED STEEL---
THE INDESTRUCTIBLE HYDRA HATH SUDDENLY FADED FROM VIEW!
THROOM!
THEN, 'TWAS BUT SOME TRICKERY-- AN ILLUSION--- AS I DID SUSPECT!
I AM FREE! YET, FROM WHENCE THE FLAMES THAT I SEE BEFORE ME? ARE THEY TOO A MIRAGE?
I WISH THEY WERE, WHISKERS!
THIS ISN'T EXACTLY THE TIME FOR DETAILS, BUT OUR HOST'S LITTLE POPGUN MUST'A HIT SOMETHIN' FLAMMABLE!
CAP, OVER THERE, LOOKS LIKE HE'S JUST STUNNED! HOIST HIM OVER YOUR SHOULDER AND LET'S GO!
WHAT OF THE BLACK WIDOW--- SHE WHOM WE DID COME HERE TO RESCUE? SHE DOTH SEEM SO LIFELESS..
SHE'S STILL BREATHIN'! BUT, IF WE DON'T GET OUTTA HERE FAST---

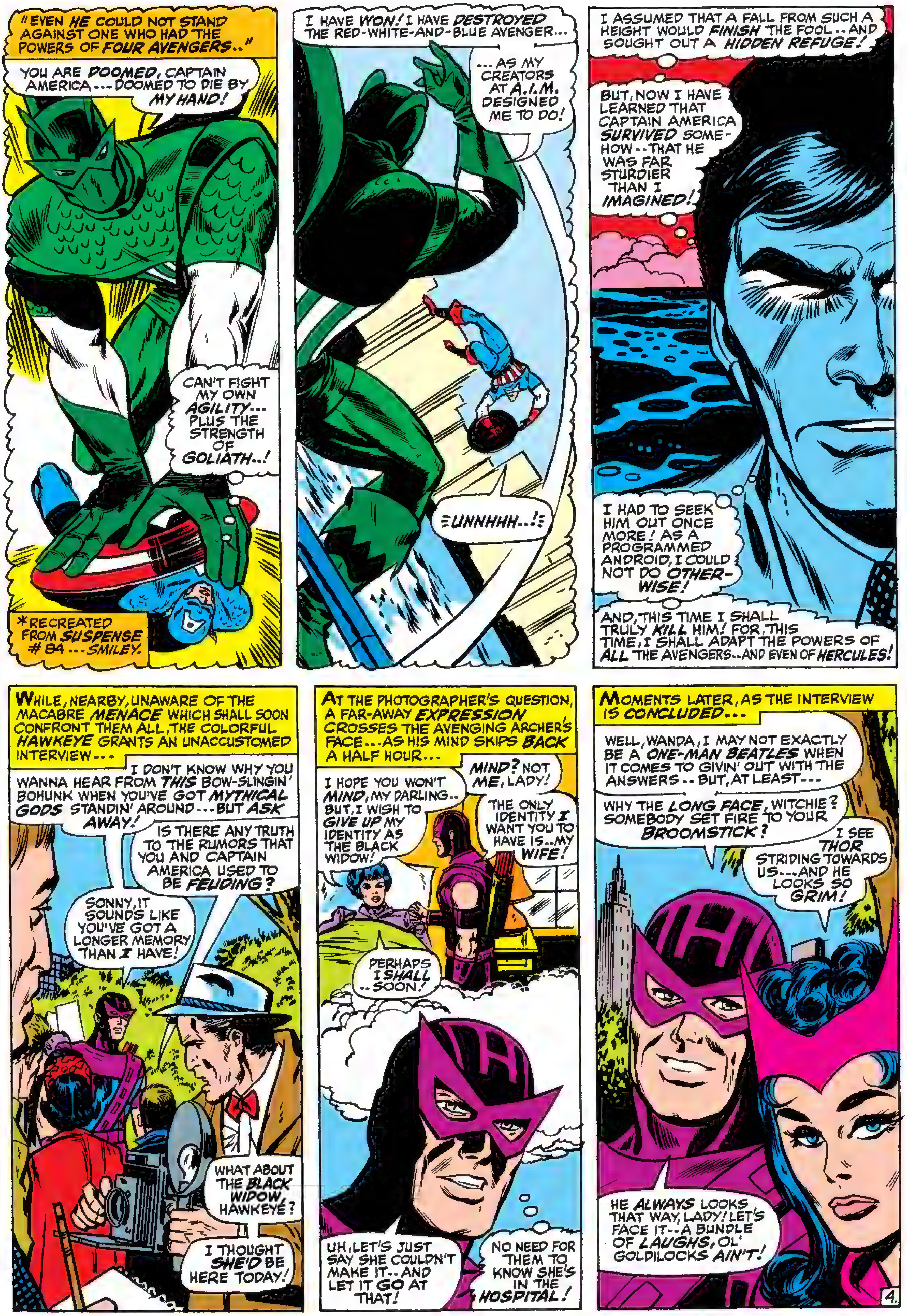

THAT SEEMS TO BE ALL THE ENCOURAGEMENT THE SON OF ZEUS REQUIRES, FOR---
WHOOM!
SINCE ALL PATHS AROUND US ARE BARRED...
...'TWOULD APPEAR THAT OUR SOLE PATH TO SAFETY IS THROUGH YON CEILING!
JUST THEN, DIRECTLY ABOVE, AS THE REMAINING AVENGERS SEARCH FOR SOME SIGN OF THEIR MISSING COMPANIONS---
LOOK! SOME HUGE PIECE OF MACHINERY... COMING THROUGH THE VERY METAL!
WHO BUT HERCULES COULD HAVE HURLED IT WITH SUCH FORCE? HE.. AND PERHAPS THE OTHERS---MUST BE DOWN THERE!
I'LL GET A ROPE READY... IN CASE IT'S NEEDED!
I'VE GOT A HUNCH HE WOULDN'T BE TOSSING THINGS AROUND JUST FOR SHOW!
AND SO, WITHIN SECONDS, THE VITAL LINE IS LOWERED..
OKAY, MAN-MOUNTAIN! PULL ME UP... AND DON'T STOP TO BREATHE!
THIS PLACE IS TURNIN' INTO AN OVEN---WITH CAP AND HERK STILL BELOW!
HOWEVER, AS THE LIFE-SAVING ROPE IS DROPPED A SECOND TIME...
AS SOON AS STEVE ROGERS RESTS SECURELY IN THE AERO-CAR, THE LION OF OLYMPUS MUST RETURN TO THIS BLAZING INFERNO--TO SAVE OUR FOES!
NO MATTER HOW HORRENDOUS THEIR CRIMES, THEY CANNOT BE LEFT TO DIE!
THE ONE CALLED HERCULES..HE IS ESCAPING...WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THAT AMERICAN FOOL... MORE THAN ANY OTHER... HAS BROUGHT ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION THAT NOW SURROUNDS ME!
WHATEVER ELSE MAY BEFALL..EVEN THOUGH THE PSYCHOTRON ITSELF BE REDUCED TO FLAMING ASHES---
---CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST BE DESTROYED!!
BUT THEN, JUST AS THE FATAL TRIGGER IS SQUEEZED...
NEVER, ACCURSED ONE.. NOT TILL THE HEAVENS CRUMBLE--
..SHALL CAPTAIN AMERICA BE KILLED BY ONE SO CRAVEN AS YOU!
HE---AND THE WOMAN I HAVE WRONGED... MUST LIVE, EVEN THOUGH WE DIE!
ZZZZZ
WATCH OUT, SWINE! THE LASER BEAM IS GOING WILD..!


WHAT HAPPENS NEXT SEEMS A MADDENED *NIGHTMARE*... OR ELSE THE FOREDESTINED PLAN OF SOME INSCRUTABLE *FATE*.. AS THE FLAILING LASER BEAM RIPS THROUGH A NEARBY WALL, STRIKING A SERIES OF UNDERGROUND *GAS PIPES*...
ZZZZZZZZ
BUH-LAM!
THE NEXT MOMENT, THE VERY *EARTH* ITSELF SEEMS TO LASH OUT IN A PAROXYSM OF RAGING *FURY*.. SPEWING FORTH ANCIENT STORES OF MOLTEN *LAVA* INTO THE CHAMBER WHICH, SECONDS BEFORE, HAD HOUSED THE *PSYCHOTRON*...
THOOOOM!
THEN, AS THE REMAINING TROOPS SCURRY DESPERATELY FOR *SAFETY*, WRITHING STREAMS FLOW THROUGH THE ENTIRE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE GIGANTIC SUBTERRANEAN BASE, BURNING ALL IN THEIR RELENTLESS *PATH*...
FLEE! NOTHING CAN STAND AGAINST SUCH A FIERY *DELUGE!*
BUT, WHERE DID THE LAVA *COME* FROM?
AND, IN THE ALMOST NOISELESSLY CIRCLING AERO-CAR ABOVE, THE MIGHTY *AVENGERS* ARE ASKING THEMSELVES THE SAME INEVITABLE *QUESTION*...
LING AND HIS BOSSES MUST HAVE MADE A *MISCALCULATION*... AND BUILT THEIR HUGE COMPLEX RIGHT ABOVE A LONG-DORMANT *VOLCANO!*
SO IT WOULD *SEEM*, HENRY PYM!
YET, IT WILL TAKE MUCH TO PERSUADE THOSE WHO *ESCAPED* ITS WRATH THAT THEIR VILE PROJECT DID NOT OFFEND THE VERY *SOIL* ON WHICH IT WAS BUILT!
AND YOU *KNOW* SOMETHING, PIETRO? AT THIS STAGE, I WOULDN'T BE INCLINED TO *ARGUE* WITH THEM!

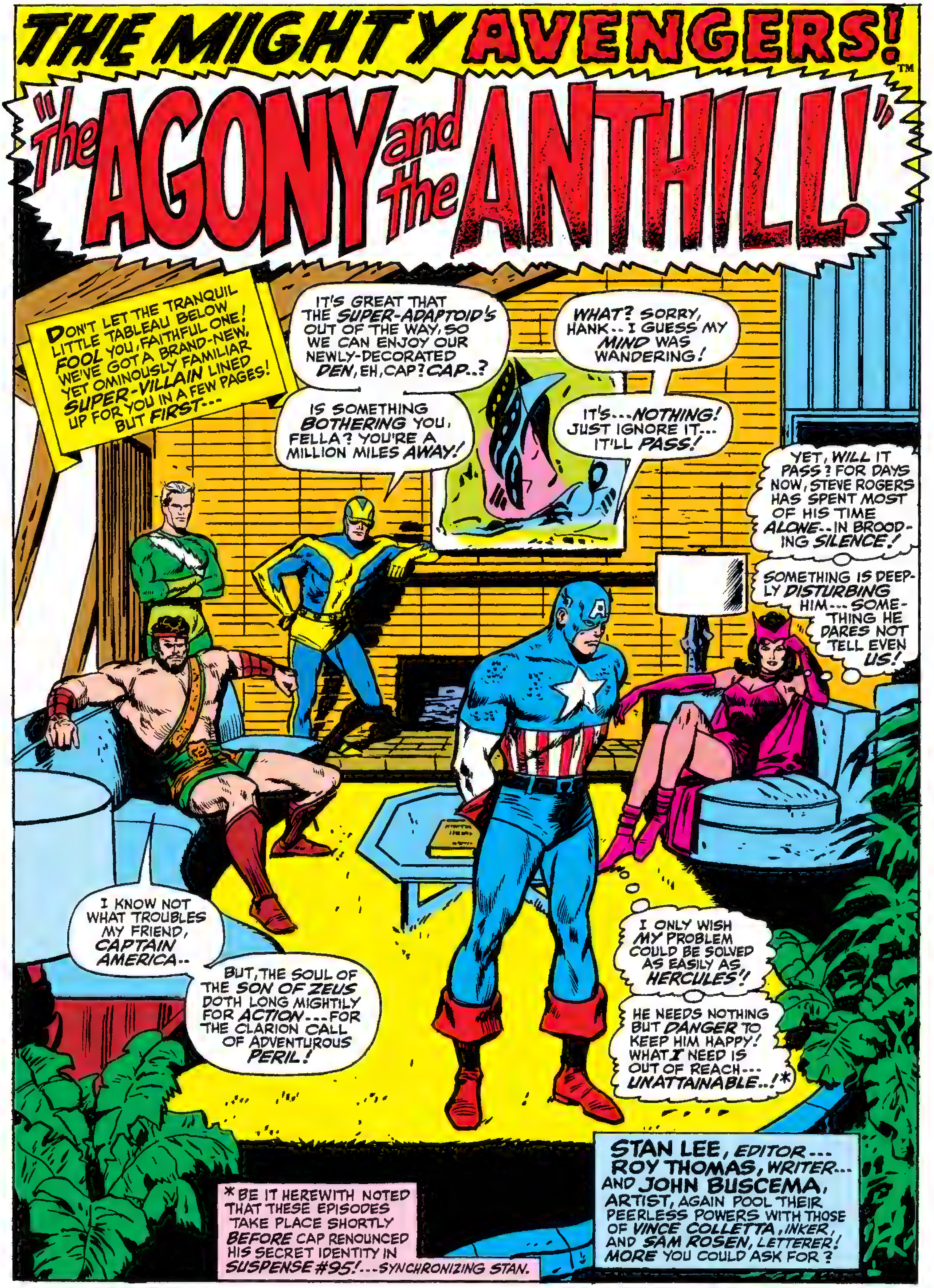

LET'S SAVE THE ARM-CHAIR PHILOSOPHY FOR LATER! THE GIRL WHO HANDED US OUR SHINY LITTLE VICTORY IS HURT... MAYBE DYING! GET THIS CRATE MOVIN'!
AT LEAST... I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO--DESTROYING THE PSYCHOTRON AND SECRETLY LEADING THE AVENGERS HERE!
WHAT DOES ONE LIFE MATTER, MY DARLING--IF THE WORLD IS SAFE?
ONE LIFE ALWAYS MATTERS, 'TASHA! THAT'S WHAT YOU FOUGHT FOR!
BESIDES, IT MATTERS.. TO ME!
MEANWHILE, AS QUICKSILVER VEERS HOMEWARD, A WEARY FIGURE SITS APART... LOST IN HIS OWN SOMBRE THOUGHTS...
FROM WHAT I'VE PIECED TOGETHER, I OWE MY LIFE TO... THE RED GUARDIAN!
STRANGE... WE WERE BORN ONLY TO CLASH... YET THERE WAS AN INVISIBLE BOND BETWEEN US!
WE FOUGHT ON DIFFERENT SIDES... BUT EACH BY HIS OWN CODE!
AND, FOR THAT CODE, THE MAN NAMED ALEXI WAS WILLING TO DIE!
BUT SOON, AS THE SUPERSONIC CRAFT REACHES HAWAII.. AND THE WOUNDED BLACK WIDOW IS RUSHED TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL... ALL THOUGHTS ARE FORGOTTEN SAVE THOSE OF HER THEY ONCE BELIEVED A TRAITOR...
YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME, DOC! IS--IS THERE A CHANCE--?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW, SON! THE FIRST AID YOU GAVE HER HELPED--- BUT, NOW SHE'S LAPSED INTO A STATE OF SHOCK!
ALL WE CAN DO IS TRY! AND, ALL YOU CAN DO.. IS PRAY!
THEN, AS THE QUIET, COURAGEOUS GIRL IS WHEELED INTO THE OPERATING ROOM... AND LOST FROM VIEW...
WHAT GOOD IS MY SKILL WITH ARROWS... WHEN THEY CAN'T HELP THE ONE PERSON WHO MATTERS MOST TO ME?
I..THINK I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, PARTNER!
IF I SHOULD LOSE HER NOW.. JUST WHEN I'VE REALLY FOUND HER...
BUT, NEVER ABANDON HOPE... NO MATTER HOW SLIM IT MAY BE!
IT MAY NOT BE MUCH... BUT IT'S ALL WE'VE GOT!
THE HOURS PASS SLOWLY, WITH EACH TICK OF THE CLOCK SEEMING AN ENDLESS ETERNITY! THEN...
SHE'S GOING TO LIVE! SHE PULLED THROUGH ON WILL POWER ALONE... BUT SHE'S GOING TO MAKE IT!
DOC, IF YOU WERE A GIRL, I'D MARRY YOU! WHEN CAN I SEE HER?
IT'LL BE A FEW DAYS! SHE NEEDS REST!
AND, I'LL SEE THAT SHE GETS IT... FROM NOW ON!
A FEW DAYS LATER, THE ROUTINE OF THE HOSPITAL STAFF IS INTERRUPTED FOR A SECOND TIME BY SEVEN COSTUMED FIGURES, AS...
THE REST OF US WANTED TO GIVE YOU TWO SOME PRIVACY, NATASHA... BUT HAWKEYE INSISTED WE COME!
YOU KNOW IT, CAP! I WANNA SHARE MY HAPPINESS WITH THE WHOLE GREAT BIG WONDERFUL WORLD!
HOW'RE YOU FEELIN', 'TASHA? THE DOC SAYS YOU'LL SOON BE AS GOOD AS NEW!
I..I'M FEELING VERY LUCKY...

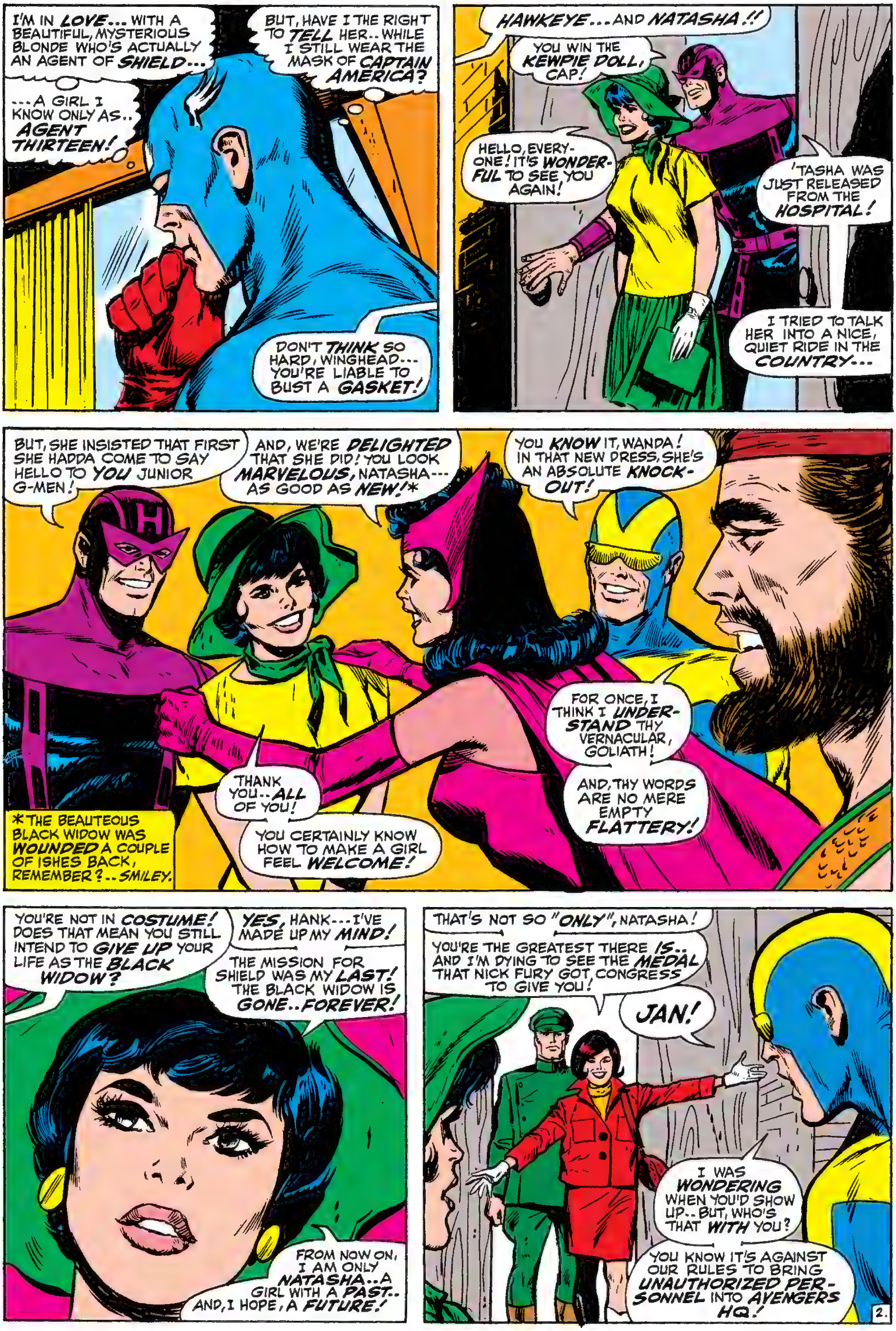

SHE'LL BE WALKING ON WALLS AGAIN IN NO TIME, EH, HERCULES?
AYE, STEVE ROGERS!
I LOOK WORSE THAN SHE DOES WHEN I GET THE SNIFFLES!
I KNEW IT'D TAKE MORE THAN ONE RAY-BLAST TO FINISH MY GAL!
'TASHA, MAYBE THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO SAY I'M SORRY FOR NOT TRUSTIN' YOU BEFORE, BUT...
PLEASE, MY DARLING.. NO WORDS ARE NECESSARY! PART OF MY ASSIGNMENT WAS TO MAKE YOU THINK ME A TRAITOR!
I'M JUST FLATTERED YOU THINK I WAS A GOOD ACTRESS!
THE BEST, LADY! THOUGH, I'VE NEVER FIGURED OUT JUST WHY YOU BECAME A SPY IN THE FIRST PLACE!
YES.. PERHAPS IT IS TIME THAT I TOLD SOMEONE... THAT I TOLD YOU!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO, DOLL! I DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY!
I WANT YOU TO KNOW, MY LOVE.. SO THAT YOU MAY UNDERSTAND...
"MY HUSBAND ALEXI... OF WHOM I HAVE NEVER BEFORE SPOKEN TO YOU... WAS ONE OF OUR HOMELAND'S MOST FAMED TEST PILOTS! BECAUSE OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY SKILL, HE WAS ASSIGNED TO TEST OUR MOST SECRET... AND MOST DANGEROUS -- AIRCRAFT!"
"AND, I WAS PROUD TO BE CALLED... HIS WIFE!"
"BUT THEN, ONE DAY...
I MUST INFORM YOU THAT YOUR HUSBAND ALEXI WAS KILLED TODAY -- WHEN HIS EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET EXPLODED!
HOWEVER, YOU WILL BE GLAD TO KNOW HE DIED A HERO... TESTING WEAPONS FOR USE AGAINST OUR ENEMIES!
IF.. IF ONLY I COULD DO SOMETHING... TO BE WORTHY OF HIS MEMORY..
PERHAPS.. THERE IS SOMETHING!
TELL ME.. TELL ME WHAT IT IS! I'LL DO ANYTHING!
NOW, I KNOW THEY LIED... SO THAT ALEXI COULD BE TRAINED TO BE THE RED GUARDIAN, AND I TO BE... THE BLACK WIDOW!
THEY CHANGED HIM SOMEHOW... MADE HIM CRUELLER! HE SEEMED HARDLY THE SAME MAN I ONCE LOVED...
LOOK, 'TASHA... YOU'D BETTER GET SOME REST!
I SHALL! I ONLY WISH... I WERE FREE TO TELL YOU OF MY MISSION FOR SHIELD!
NO NEED! WE GOT IT STRAIGHT FROM NICK FURY HIMSELF...
...HOW YOU WERE UNDER POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION TO BELIEVE YOU WERE ON THEIR SIDE, WHEN YOUR LOYALTY WAS QUESTIONED!
YES! ONLY THUS COULD I HAVE RESISTED... THE PSYCHOTRON!
AND, JUST ONE FINAL THING, NATASHA! LING AND HIS CRONIES SPENT YEARS TRAINING ALEXI... TO BE JUST A SUPER-POWERFUL PUPPET OF THE STATE!
BUT, WHEN THE CHIPS WERE DOWN, HIS FEELINGS FOR YOU TRIUMPHED OVER THAT TRAINING ...AND HE DIED A MAN!
20.
NEXT ISH: BLITZKRIEG IN CENTRAL PARK!

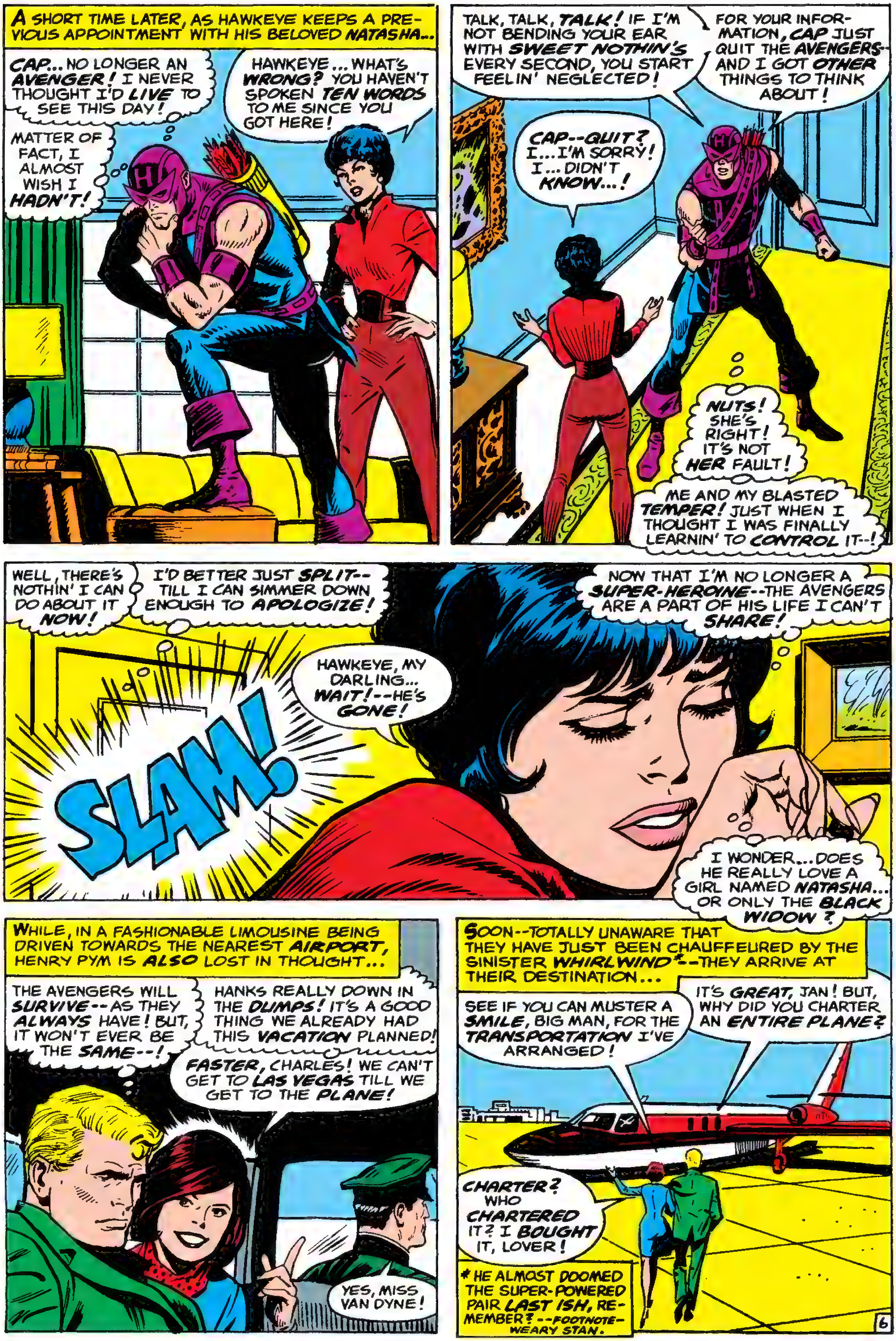

WITHIN MINUTES, THE CRUISING AERO-CAR HAS LANDED NEAR A SPECIALLY-CONSTRUCTED SHELL IN FAMOUS CENTRAL PARK... AMIDST A CROWD OF WELL-WISHERS...
THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER MAKE IT, WHITEY!
HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE PART OF AVENGER DAY?
I AM... HONORED, OF COURSE, HAWKEYE!
BUT, HOW IS THE BLACK WIDOW? I KNOW YOU HAVE COME HERE FROM THE HOSPITAL!
SHE'S FINE... BUT, SHE WON'T BE TURNIN' ANY CARTWHEELS FOR A WHILE!
WELCOME
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! ALL THE AVENGERS IN PERSON... WHAT A DAY FOR AN AUTOGRAPH HOUND!
LOOK! THERE ARE THOR AND IRON MAN... BUT, WHO'S THAT WITH THEM?
THAT'S HERCULES, GAL! HE'S IN EXILE HERE ON EARTH... OR HAVE YOU BEEN VACATIONING IN SIBERIA?
TWO OF THEM AREN'T HERE YET! I WONDER WHERE THEY ARE!?
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, OUR LIONIZED SUPER-HEROES ARE WONDERING THE SAME THING...
WHERE BE THY SHIELD-BEARING ALLY, ARCHER... AND JANET VAN DYNE?
MAN-MOUNTAIN HERE SAYS HIS LADY FRIEND TOOK A POWDER! BUT, I'M BETTIN' SHE JUST WANTS TO BE STYLISHLY LATE!
AS FOR CAP, HE JUST RADIOED US THAT HE WAS ON HIS WAY!
I HOPE HE IS NOT LONG DELAYED!
IRON MAN AND I LEFT OTHER PRESSING MATTERS TO PARTAKE IN THIS EVENT!
BUT, ONE THERE IS IN THE THRONG WHO IS EVEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE STAR-SPANGLED AVENGER...
WHY DOES HE NOT COME?
DOES HE PERHAPS KNOW THAT I... ONE OF HIS GREATEST FOES.. AM WAITING HERE FOR HIM?
NO! HE CANNOT KNOW... HE CANNOT EVEN SUSPECT!
THIS TIME, THERE CAN BE NO MISTAKE! THIS TIME, CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST DIE!
WELL DO I REMEMBER WHEN LAST I ENCOUNTERED HIM WHO IS TO BE MY VICTIM...
THAT IS THE MISSION THAT I WAS CREATED FOR... THAT MY PHOTO-ELECTRIC CIRCUITS WERE PROGRAMMED FOR! THAT IS THE REASON WHY THERE EXISTS... THE SUPER-ADAPTOID!
3.

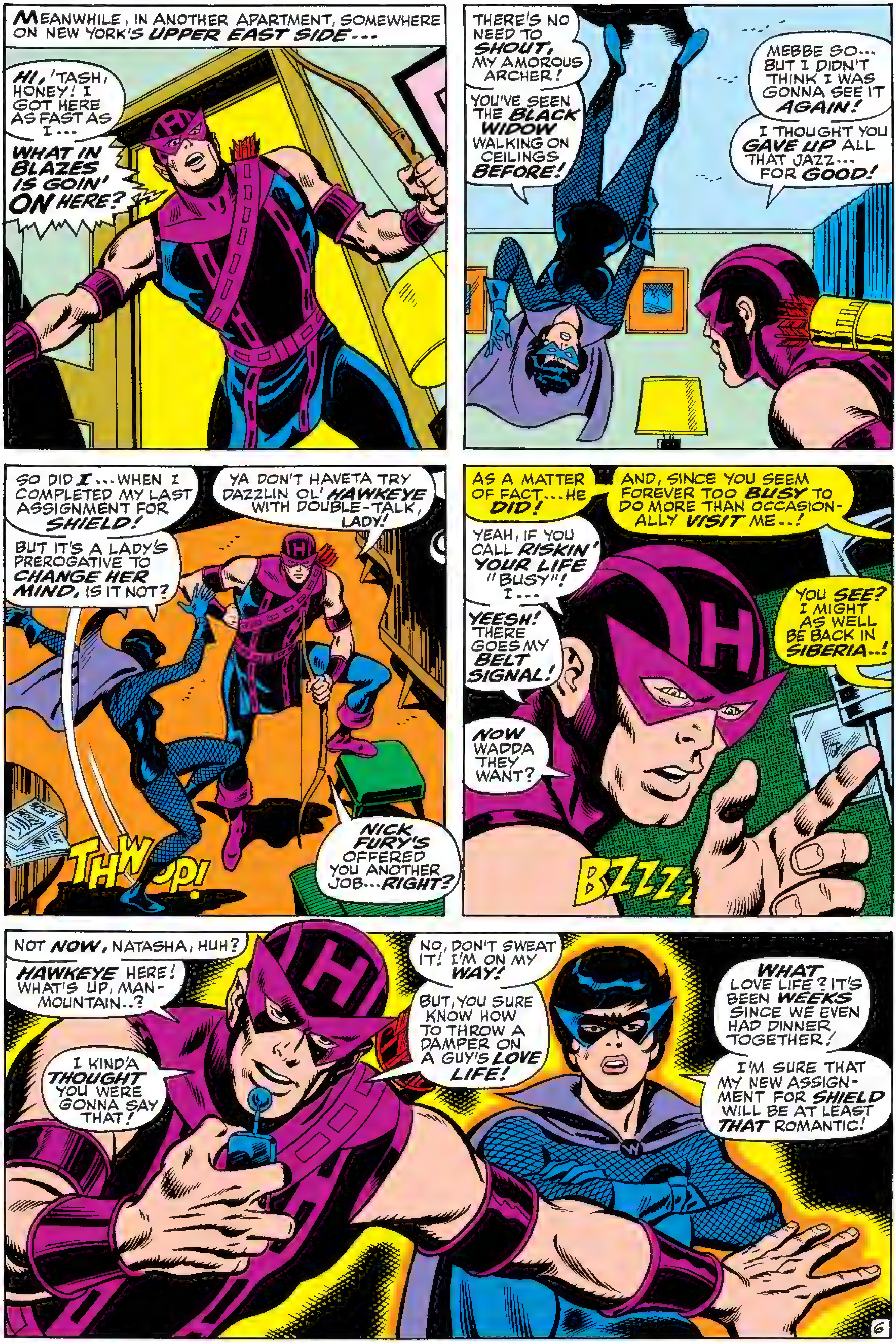

"EVEN *HE* COULD NOT STAND AGAINST ONE WHO HAD THE POWERS OF *FOUR AVENGERS*.."
YOU ARE *DOOMED,* CAPTAIN AMERICA--- DOOMED TO DIE BY *MY HAND!*
CAN'T FIGHT MY OWN *AGILITY*... PLUS THE STRENGTH OF *GOLIATH*..!
*RECREATED FROM *SUSPENSE # 84*... SMILEY.
I HAVE *WON!* I HAVE *DESTROYED* THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER...
...AS MY CREATORS AT *A.I.M.* DESIGNED ME TO DO!
UNNHHH..!
I ASSUMED THAT A FALL FROM SUCH A HEIGHT WOULD *FINISH* THE FOOL..AND SOUGHT OUT A *HIDDEN REFUGE!*
BUT, NOW I HAVE LEARNED THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA *SURVIVED* SOMEHOW--THAT HE WAS FAR STURDIER THAN I *IMAGINED!*
I HAD TO SEEK HIM OUT ONCE MORE! AS A PROGRAMMED ANDROID, I COULD NOT DO *OTHERWISE!*
AND, THIS TIME I SHALL TRULY *KILL* HIM! FOR, THIS TIME, I SHALL ADAPT THE POWERS OF *ALL* THE AVENGERS..AND EVEN OF *HERCULES!*
WHILE, NEARBY, UNAWARE OF THE MACABRE *MENACE* WHICH SHALL SOON CONFRONT THEM ALL, THE COLORFUL *HAWKEYE* GRANTS AN UNACCUSTOMED INTERVIEW---
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WANNA HEAR FROM *THIS* BOW-SLINGIN' BOHUNK WHEN YOU'VE GOT *MYTHICAL GODS* STANDIN' AROUND---BUT *ASK AWAY!*
IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMORS THAT YOU AND CAPTAIN AMERICA USED TO BE *FEUDING?*
SONNY, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A LONGER MEMORY THAN *I* HAVE!
WHAT ABOUT *THE BLACK WIDOW,* HAWKEYE?
I THOUGHT *SHE'D* BE HERE TODAY!
AT THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S QUESTION, A FAR-AWAY *EXPRESSION CROSSES* THE AVENGING ARCHER'S FACE...AS HIS MIND SKIPS *BACK* A HALF HOUR...
I HOPE YOU WON'T *MIND,* MY DARLING.. BUT, I WISH TO *GIVE UP* MY IDENTITY AS THE BLACK WIDOW!
MIND? NOT *ME,* LADY!
THE ONLY IDENTITY *I* WANT YOU TO HAVE IS..MY *WIFE!*
PERHAPS *I SHALL* ..SOON!
UH, LET'S JUST SAY SHE COULDN'T MAKE IT..AND LET IT *GO* AT THAT!
NO NEED FOR THEM TO KNOW SHE'S IN THE *HOSPITAL!*
MOMENTS LATER, AS THE INTERVIEW IS *CONCLUDED*...
WELL, WANDA, I MAY NOT EXACTLY BE A *ONE-MAN BEATLES* WHEN IT COMES TO GIVIN' OUT WITH THE ANSWERS-- BUT, AT LEAST---
WHY THE *LONG FACE,* WITCHIE? SOMEBODY SET FIRE TO YOUR *BROOMSTICK?*
I SEE *THOR* STRIDING TOWARDS US...AND HE LOOKS SO *GRIM!*
HE *ALWAYS* LOOKS THAT WAY, LADY! LET'S FACE IT--A BUNDLE OF *LAUGHS,* OL' GOLDILOCKS *AIN'T!*

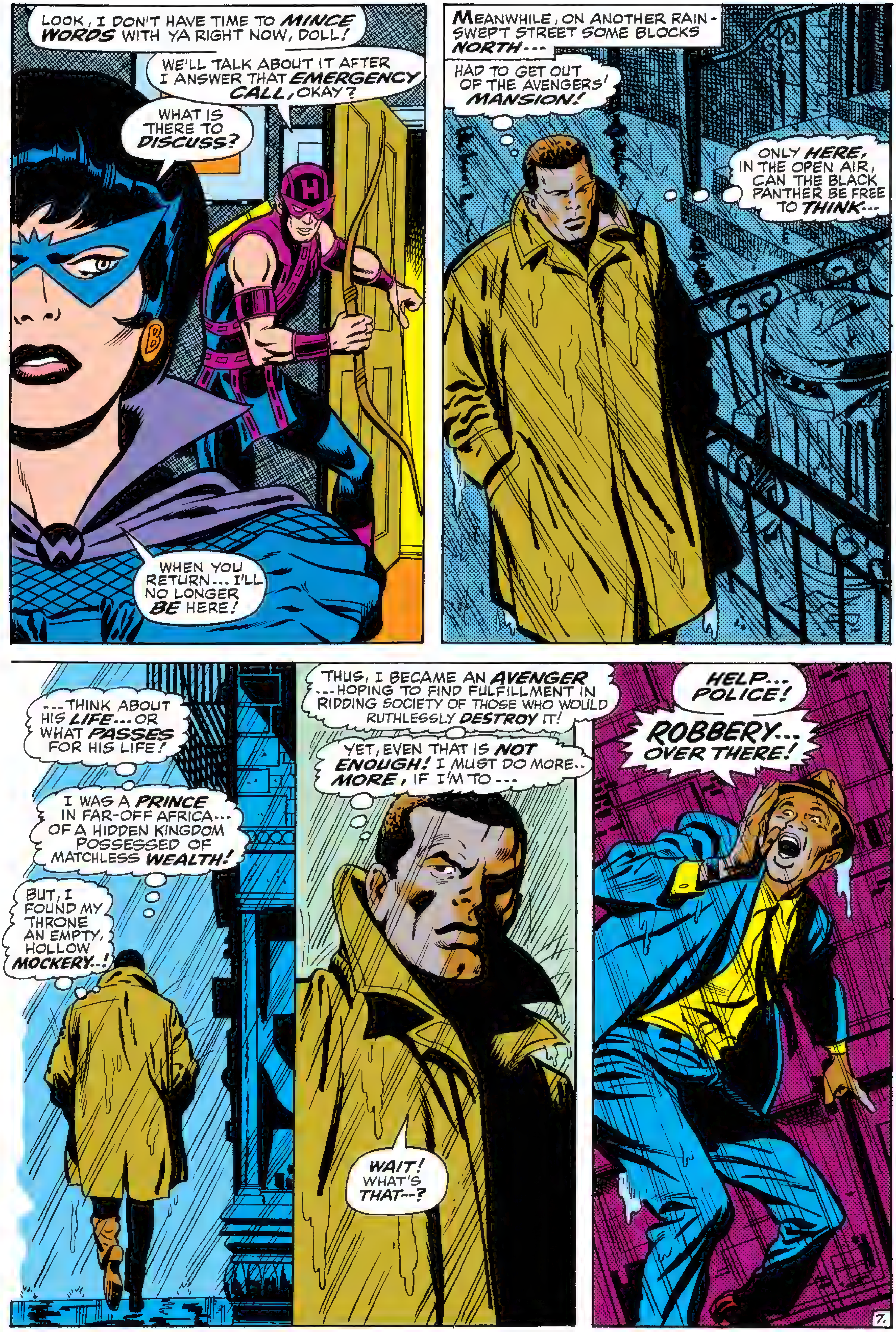
AVENGERS #46 (NOVEMBER 1967)

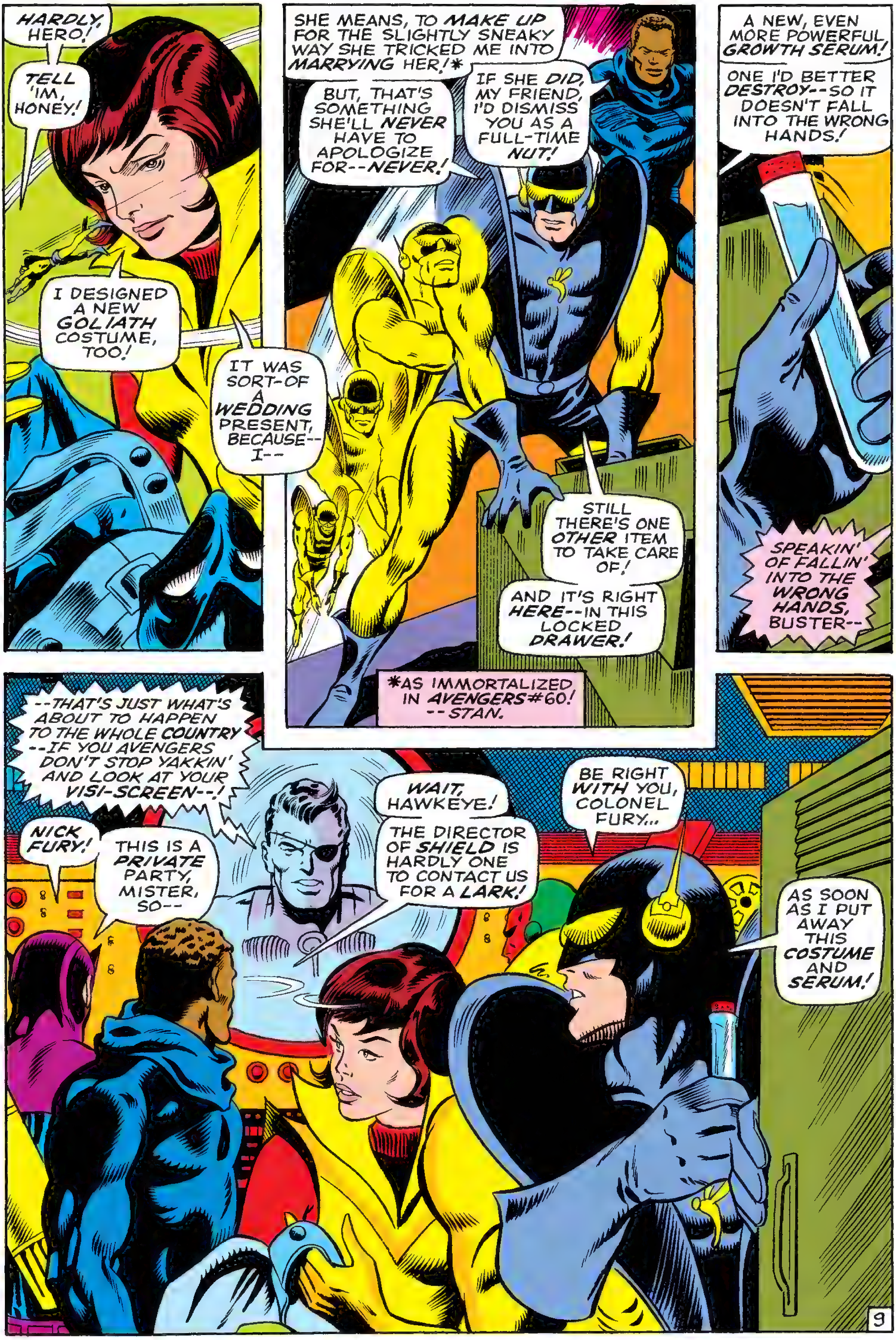

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!™
"The AGONY and the ANTHILL!"
DON'T LET THE TRANQUIL LITTLE TABLEAU BELOW FOOL YOU, FAITHFUL ONE! WE'VE GOT A BRAND-NEW, YET OMINOUSLY FAMILIAR SUPER-VILLAIN LINED UP FOR YOU IN A FEW PAGES! BUT FIRST...
IT'S GREAT THAT THE SUPER-ADAPTOID'S OUT OF THE WAY, SO WE CAN ENJOY OUR NEWLY-DECORATED DEN, EH, CAP? CAP..?
IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, FELLA? YOU'RE A MILLION MILES AWAY!
WHAT? SORRY, HANK.. I GUESS MY MIND WAS WANDERING!
IT'S...NOTHING! JUST IGNORE IT... IT'LL PASS!
YET, WILL IT PASS? FOR DAYS NOW, STEVE ROGERS HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME ALONE.. IN BROODING SILENCE!
SOMETHING IS DEEPLY DISTURBING HIM... SOMETHING HE DARES NOT TELL EVEN US!
I KNOW NOT WHAT TROUBLES MY FRIEND, CAPTAIN AMERICA..
BUT, THE SOUL OF THE SON OF ZEUS DOTH LONG MIGHTILY FOR ACTION...FOR THE CLARION CALL OF ADVENTUROUS PERIL!
I ONLY WISH MY PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED AS EASILY AS HERCULES'!
HE NEEDS NOTHING BUT DANGER TO KEEP HIM HAPPY! WHAT I NEED IS OUT OF REACH... UNATTAINABLE..!*
*BE IT HEREWITH NOTED THAT THESE EPISODES TAKE PLACE SHORTLY BEFORE CAP RENOUNCED HIS SECRET IDENTITY IN SUSPENSE #95!..SYNCHRONIZING STAN.
STAN LEE, EDITOR... ROY THOMAS, WRITER... AND JOHN BUSCEMA, ARTIST, AGAIN POOL THEIR PEERLESS POWERS WITH THOSE OF VINCE COLLETTA, INKER, AND SAM ROSEN, LETTERER! MORE YOU COULD ASK FOR?

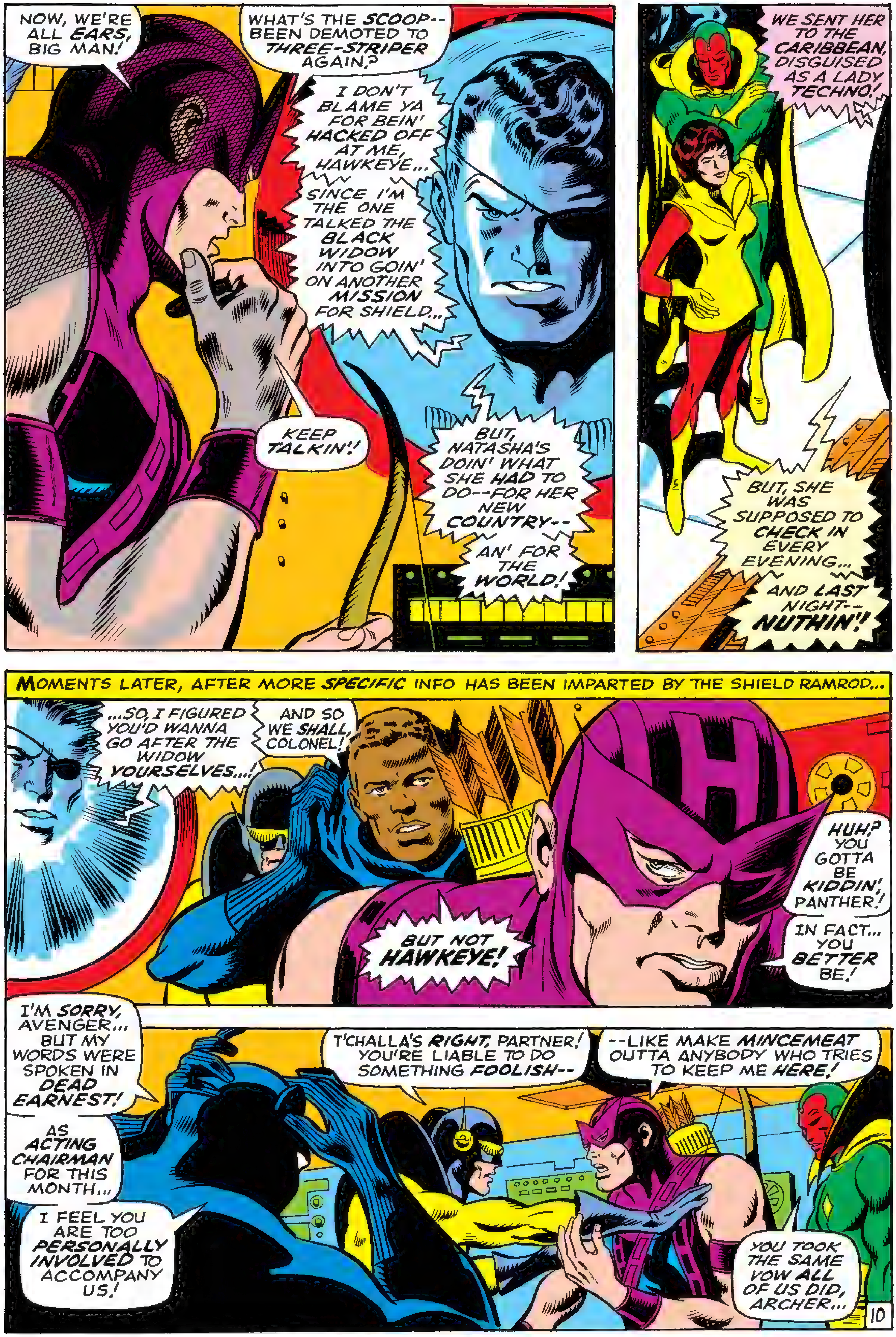

I'M IN LOVE... WITH A BEAUTIFUL, MYSTERIOUS BLONDE WHO'S ACTUALLY AN AGENT OF SHIELD...
BUT, HAVE I THE RIGHT TO TELL HER.. WHILE I STILL WEAR THE MASK OF CAPTAIN AMERICA?
...A GIRL I KNOW ONLY AS.. AGENT THIRTEEN!
DON'T THINK SO HARD, WINGHEAD--- YOU'RE LIABLE TO BUST A GASKET!
HAWKEYE...AND NATASHA!!
YOU WIN THE KEWPIE DOLL, CAP!
HELLO, EVERYONE! IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
'TASHA WAS JUST RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL!
I TRIED TO TALK HER INTO A NICE, QUIET RIDE IN THE COUNTRY...
BUT, SHE INSISTED THAT FIRST SHE HADDA COME TO SAY HELLO TO YOU JUNIOR G-MEN!
AND, WE'RE DELIGHTED THAT SHE DID! YOU LOOK MARVELOUS, NATASHA--- AS GOOD AS NEW!*
YOU KNOW IT, WANDA! IN THAT NEW DRESS, SHE'S AN ABSOLUTE KNOCK-OUT!
FOR ONCE, I THINK I UNDERSTAND THY VERNACULAR, GOLIATH!
AND, THY WORDS ARE NO MERE EMPTY FLATTERY!
THANK YOU.. ALL OF YOU!
YOU CERTAINLY KNOW HOW TO MAKE A GIRL FEEL WELCOME!
*THE BEAUTEOUS BLACK WIDOW WAS WOUNDED A COUPLE OF ISHES BACK, REMEMBER?.. SMILEY.
YOU'RE NOT IN COSTUME! DOES THAT MEAN YOU STILL INTEND TO GIVE UP YOUR LIFE AS THE BLACK WIDOW?
YES, HANK---I'VE MADE UP MY MIND!
THE MISSION FOR SHIELD WAS MY LAST! THE BLACK WIDOW IS GONE.. FOREVER!
FROM NOW ON, I AM ONLY NATASHA.. A GIRL WITH A PAST.. AND, I HOPE, A FUTURE!
THAT'S NOT SO "ONLY", NATASHA!
YOU'RE THE GREATEST THERE IS.. AND I'M DYING TO SEE THE MEDAL THAT NICK FURY GOT CONGRESS TO GIVE YOU!
JAN!
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D SHOW UP.. BUT, WHO'S THAT WITH YOU?
YOU KNOW IT'S AGAINST OUR RULES TO BRING UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL INTO AVENGERS HQ!

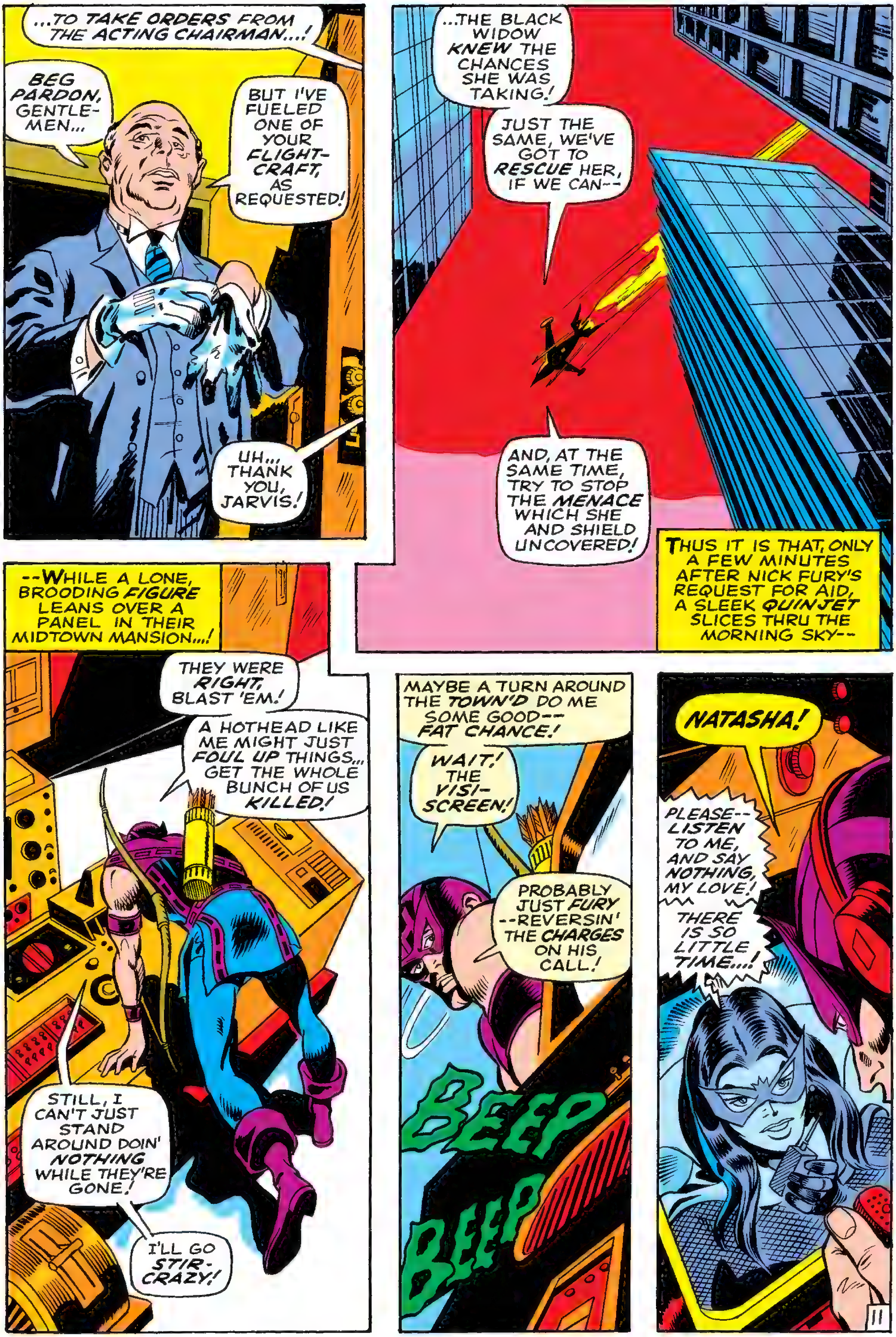

A SHORT TIME LATER, AS HAWKEYE KEEPS A PREVIOUS APPOINTMENT WITH HIS BELOVED NATASHA...
CAP... NO LONGER AN AVENGER! I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LIVE TO SEE THIS DAY!
MATTER OF FACT, I ALMOST WISH I HADN'T!
HAWKEYE ... WHAT'S WRONG? YOU HAVEN'T SPOKEN TEN WORDS TO ME SINCE YOU GOT HERE!
TALK, TALK, TALK! IF I'M NOT BENDING YOUR EAR WITH SWEET NOTHIN'S EVERY SECOND, YOU START FEELIN' NEGLECTED!
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, CAP JUST QUIT THE AVENGERS--AND I GOT OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT!
CAP--QUIT? I...I'M SORRY! I... DIDN'T KNOW...!
NUTS! SHE'S RIGHT! IT'S NOT HER FAULT!
ME AND MY BLASTED TEMPER! JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS FINALLY LEARNIN' TO CONTROL IT--!
WELL, THERE'S NOTHIN' I CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW!
I'D BETTER JUST SPLIT--TILL I CAN SIMMER DOWN ENOUGH TO APOLOGIZE!
SLAM!
HAWKEYE, MY DARLING... WAIT!--HE'S GONE!
NOW THAT I'M NO LONGER A SUPER-HEROINE--THE AVENGERS ARE A PART OF HIS LIFE I CAN'T SHARE!
I WONDER...DOES HE REALLY LOVE A GIRL NAMED NATASHA... OR ONLY THE BLACK WIDOW?
WHILE, IN A FASHIONABLE LIMOUSINE BEING DRIVEN TOWARDS THE NEAREST AIRPORT, HENRY PYM IS ALSO LOST IN THOUGHT...
THE AVENGERS WILL SURVIVE--AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE! BUT, IT WON'T EVER BE THE SAME--!
HANK'S REALLY DOWN IN THE DUMPS! IT'S A GOOD THING WE ALREADY HAD THIS VACATION PLANNED!
FASTER, CHARLES! WE CAN'T GET TO LAS VEGAS TILL WE GET TO THE PLANE!
YES, MISS VAN DYNE!
SOON--TOTALLY UNAWARE THAT THEY HAVE JUST BEEN CHAUFFEURED BY THE SINISTER WHIRLWIND*--THEY ARRIVE AT THEIR DESTINATION...
SEE IF YOU CAN MUSTER A SMILE, BIG MAN, FOR THE TRANSPORTATION I'VE ARRANGED!
IT'S GREAT, JAN! BUT, WHY DID YOU CHARTER AN ENTIRE PLANE?
CHARTER? WHO CHARTERED IT? I BOUGHT IT, LOVER!
* HE ALMOST DOOMED THE SUPER-POWERED PAIR LAST ISH, REMEMBER? --FOOTNOTE-WEARY STAN.
6

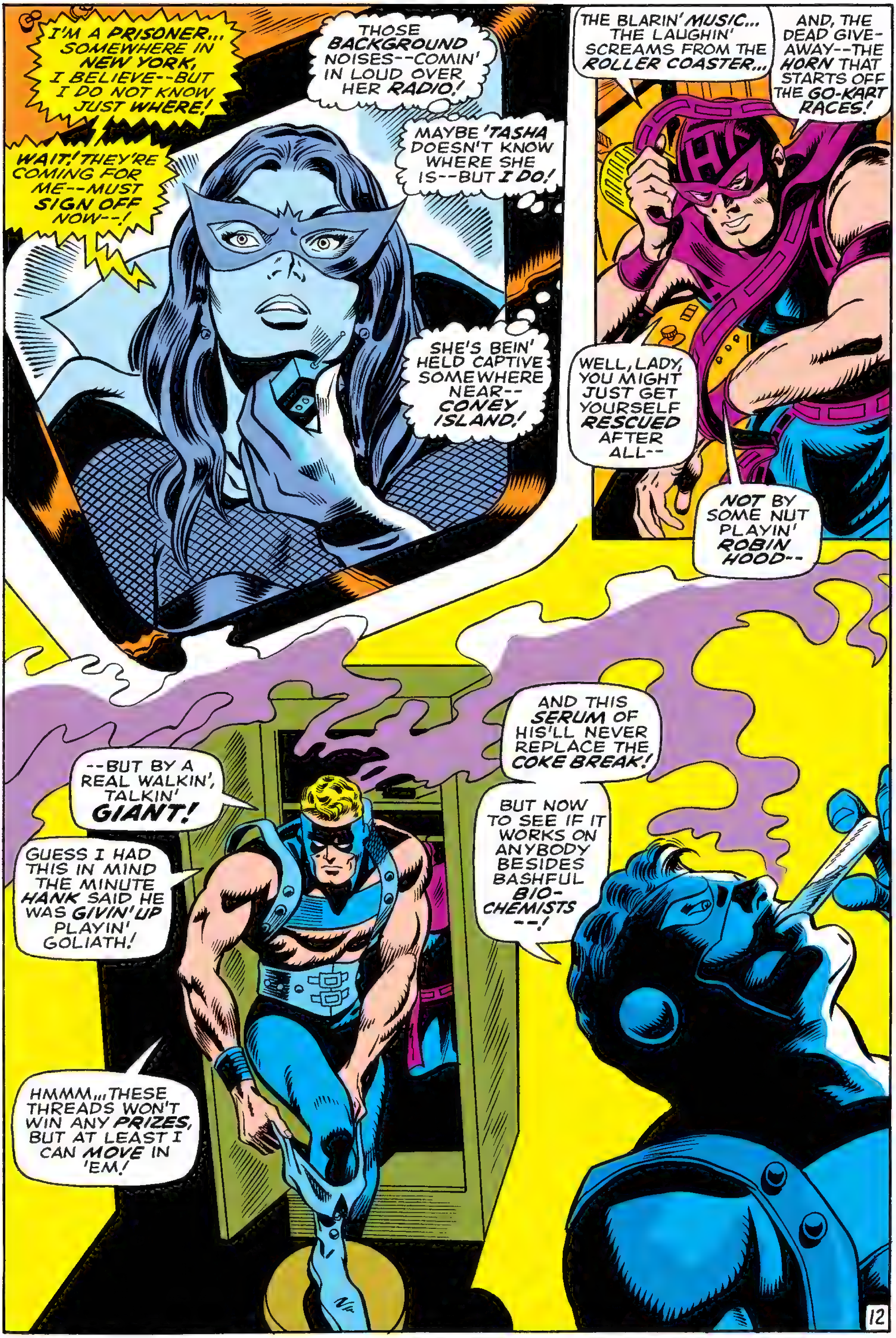

MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER APARTMENT, SOMEWHERE ON NEW YORK'S UPPER EAST SIDE---
HI, 'TASH, HONEY! I GOT HERE AS FAST AS I---
WHAT IN BLAZES IS GOIN' ON HERE?
THERE'S NO NEED TO SHOUT, MY AMOROUS ARCHER!
YOU'VE SEEN THE BLACK WIDOW WALKING ON CEILINGS BEFORE!
MEBBE SO... BUT I DIDN'T THINK I WAS GONNA SEE IT AGAIN!
I THOUGHT YOU GAVE UP ALL THAT JAZZ... FOR GOOD!
SO DID I... WHEN I COMPLETED MY LAST ASSIGNMENT FOR SHIELD!
BUT IT'S A LADY'S PREROGATIVE TO CHANGE HER MIND, IS IT NOT?
YA DON'T HAVETA TRY DAZZLIN OL' HAWKEYE WITH DOUBLE-TALK, LADY!
NICK FURY'S OFFERED YOU ANOTHER JOB... RIGHT?
THWOP!
AS A MATTER OF FACT... HE DID!
AND, SINCE YOU SEEM FOREVER TOO BUSY TO DO MORE THAN OCCASIONALLY VISIT ME..!
YEAH, IF YOU CALL RISKIN' YOUR LIFE "BUSY"! I---
YEESH! THERE GOES MY BELT SIGNAL!
NOW WADDA THEY WANT?
YOU SEE? I MIGHT AS WELL BE BACK IN SIBERIA..!
BZZZZ
NOT NOW, NATASHA, HUH?
HAWKEYE HERE! WHAT'S UP, MAN-MOUNTAIN..?
I KIND'A THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA SAY THAT!
NO, DON'T SWEAT IT! I'M ON MY WAY!
BUT, YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO THROW A DAMPER ON A GUY'S LOVE LIFE!
WHAT, LOVE LIFE? IT'S BEEN WEEKS SINCE WE EVEN HAD DINNER TOGETHER!
I'M SURE THAT MY NEW ASSIGNMENT FOR SHIELD WILL BE AT LEAST THAT ROMANTIC!
6

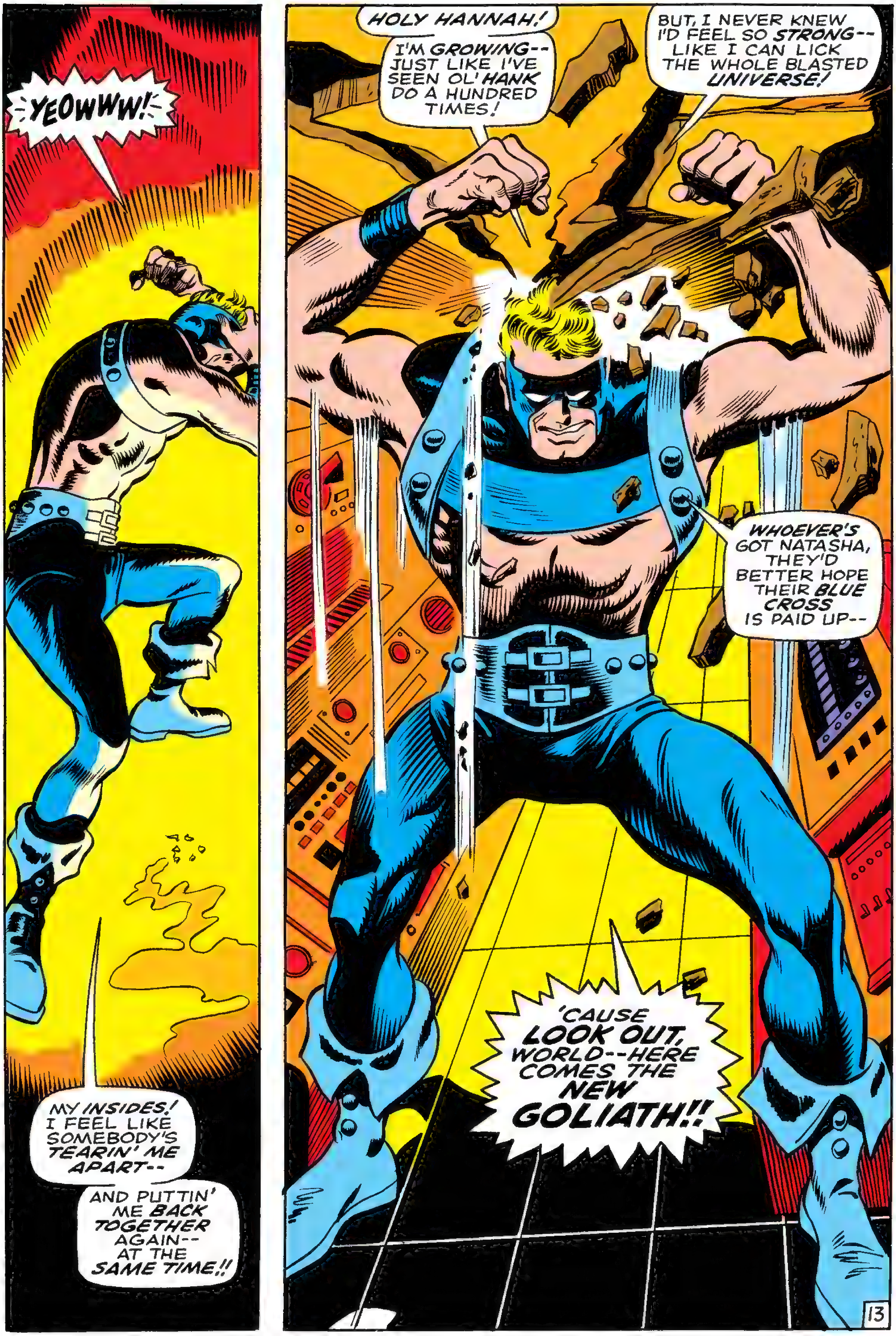

LOOK, I DON'T HAVE TIME TO MINCE WORDS WITH YA RIGHT NOW, DOLL!
WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT AFTER I ANSWER THAT EMERGENCY CALL, OKAY?
WHAT IS THERE TO DISCUSS?
WHEN YOU RETURN... I'LL NO LONGER BE HERE!
MEANWHILE, ON ANOTHER RAIN-SWEPT STREET SOME BLOCKS NORTH---
HAD TO GET OUT OF THE AVENGERS' MANSION!
ONLY HERE, IN THE OPEN AIR, CAN THE BLACK PANTHER BE FREE TO THINK---
---THINK ABOUT HIS LIFE---OR WHAT PASSES FOR HIS LIFE!
I WAS A PRINCE IN FAR-OFF AFRICA---OF A HIDDEN KINGDOM POSSESSED OF MATCHLESS WEALTH!
BUT, I FOUND MY THRONE AN EMPTY, HOLLOW MOCKERY..!
THUS, I BECAME AN AVENGER ---HOPING TO FIND FULFILLMENT IN RIDDING SOCIETY OF THOSE WHO WOULD RUTHLESSLY DESTROY IT!
YET, EVEN THAT IS NOT ENOUGH! I MUST DO MORE.. MORE, IF I'M TO ---
WAIT! WHAT'S THAT--?
HELP... POLICE!
ROBBERY... OVER THERE!

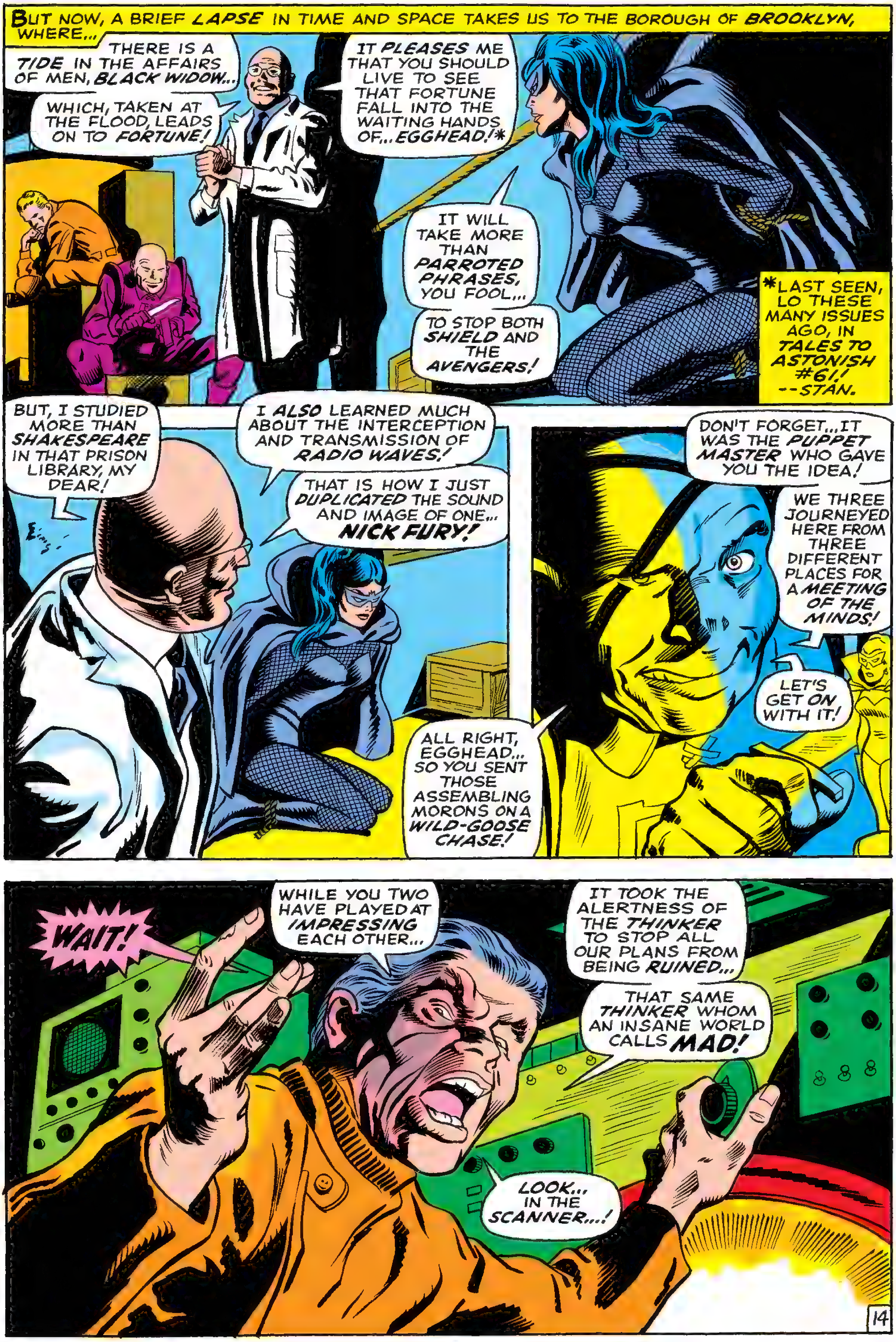

HARDLY, HERO!
TELL 'IM, HONEY!
I DESIGNED A NEW GOLIATH COSTUME, TOO!
IT WAS SORT-OF A WEDDING PRESENT, BECAUSE-- I--
SHE MEANS, TO MAKE UP FOR THE SLIGHTLY SNEAKY WAY SHE TRICKED ME INTO MARRYING HER!*
BUT, THAT'S SOMETHING SHE'LL NEVER HAVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR--NEVER!
IF SHE DID, MY FRIEND, I'D DISMISS YOU AS A FULL-TIME NUT!
STILL THERE'S ONE OTHER ITEM TO TAKE CARE OF!
AND IT'S RIGHT HERE--IN THIS LOCKED DRAWER!
*AS IMMORTALIZED IN AVENGERS #60! --STAN.
A NEW, EVEN MORE POWERFUL GROWTH SERUM!
ONE I'D BETTER DESTROY--SO IT DOESN'T FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS!
SPEAKIN' OF FALLIN' INTO THE WRONG HANDS, BUSTER--
--THAT'S JUST WHAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO THE WHOLE COUNTRY --IF YOU AVENGERS DON'T STOP YAKKIN' AND LOOK AT YOUR VISI-SCREEN--!
NICK FURY!
THIS IS A PRIVATE PARTY, MISTER, SO--
WAIT, HAWKEYE!
THE DIRECTOR OF SHIELD IS HARDLY ONE TO CONTACT US FOR A LARK!
BE RIGHT WITH YOU, COLONEL FURY...
AS SOON AS I PUT AWAY THIS COSTUME AND SERUM!
9

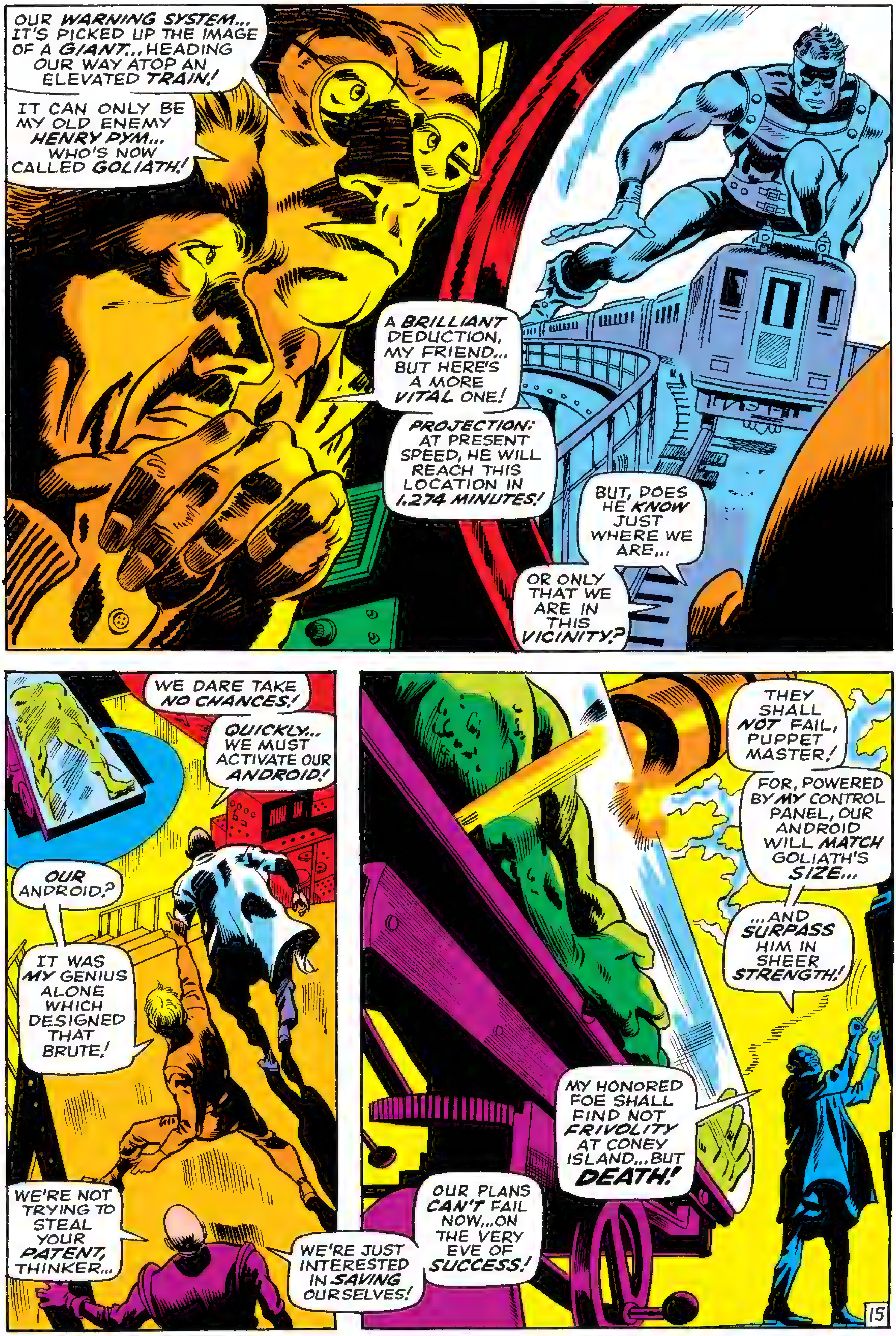

NOW, WE'RE ALL *EARS*, BIG MAN!
WHAT'S THE *SCOOP*-- BEEN DEMOTED TO *THREE-STRIPER* AGAIN?
I DON'T BLAME YA FOR BEIN' *HACKED OFF* AT ME, HAWKEYE...
SINCE I'M THE ONE TALKED THE *BLACK WIDOW* INTO GOIN' ON ANOTHER *MISSION* FOR SHIELD...
KEEP TALKIN'!
BUT, NATASHA'S DOIN' WHAT SHE *HAD* TO DO--FOR HER NEW *COUNTRY*--
AN' FOR THE *WORLD!*
WE SENT HER TO THE *CARIBBEAN*, DISGUISED AS A LADY *TECHNO!*
BUT, SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO *CHECK IN* EVERY EVENING...
AND *LAST* NIGHT-- *NUTHIN'!*
MOMENTS LATER, AFTER MORE *SPECIFIC* INFO HAS BEEN IMPARTED BY THE SHIELD RAMROD...
...SO, I FIGURED YOU'D WANNA GO AFTER THE WIDOW *YOURSELVES...!*
AND SO WE *SHALL*, COLONEL!
BUT NOT *HAWKEYE!*
HUH? YOU GOTTA BE *KIDDIN'*, PANTHER!
IN FACT... YOU *BETTER* BE!
I'M *SORRY*, AVENGER... BUT MY WORDS WERE SPOKEN IN *DEAD EARNEST!*
AS *ACTING CHAIRMAN* FOR THIS MONTH...
I FEEL YOU ARE TOO *PERSONALLY INVOLVED* TO ACCOMPANY US!
T'CHALLA'S *RIGHT*, PARTNER! YOU'RE LIABLE TO DO SOMETHING *FOOLISH*--
--LIKE MAKE *MINCEMEAT* OUTTA ANYBODY WHO TRIES TO KEEP ME *HERE!*
YOU TOOK THE SAME VOW *ALL* OF US DID, ARCHER...

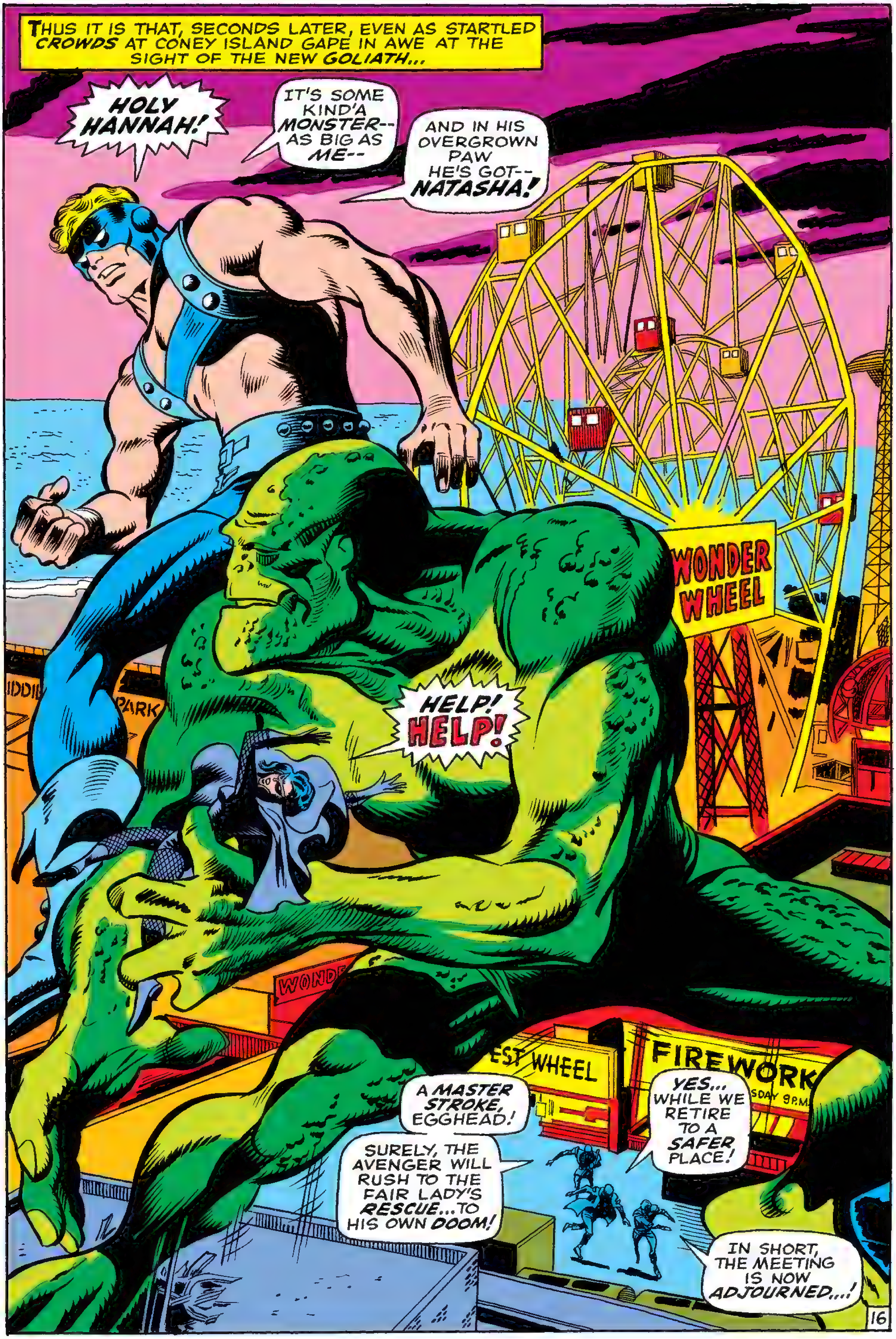

...TO TAKE ORDERS FROM THE ACTING CHAIRMAN...!
BEG PARDON, GENTLEMEN...
BUT I'VE FUELED ONE OF YOUR FLIGHT-CRAFT, AS REQUESTED!
UH... THANK YOU, JARVIS!
...THE BLACK WIDOW KNEW THE CHANCES SHE WAS TAKING!
JUST THE SAME, WE'VE GOT TO RESCUE HER, IF WE CAN--
AND, AT THE SAME TIME, TRY TO STOP THE MENACE WHICH SHE AND SHIELD UNCOVERED!
THUS IT IS THAT, ONLY A FEW MINUTES AFTER NICK FURY'S REQUEST FOR AID, A SLEEK QUINJET SLICES THRU THE MORNING SKY--
--WHILE A LONE, BROODING FIGURE LEANS OVER A PANEL IN THEIR MIDTOWN MANSION...!
THEY WERE RIGHT, BLAST 'EM!
A HOTHEAD LIKE ME MIGHT JUST FOUL UP THINGS... GET THE WHOLE BUNCH OF US KILLED!
STILL, I CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND DOIN' NOTHING WHILE THEY'RE GONE!
I'LL GO STIR-CRAZY!
MAYBE A TURN AROUND THE TOWN'D DO ME SOME GOOD-- FAT CHANCE!
WAIT! THE VISI-SCREEN!
PROBABLY JUST FURY --REVERSIN' THE CHARGES ON HIS CALL!
BEEP
BEEP
NATASHA!
PLEASE-- LISTEN TO ME, AND SAY NOTHING, MY LOVE!
THERE IS SO LITTLE TIME...!

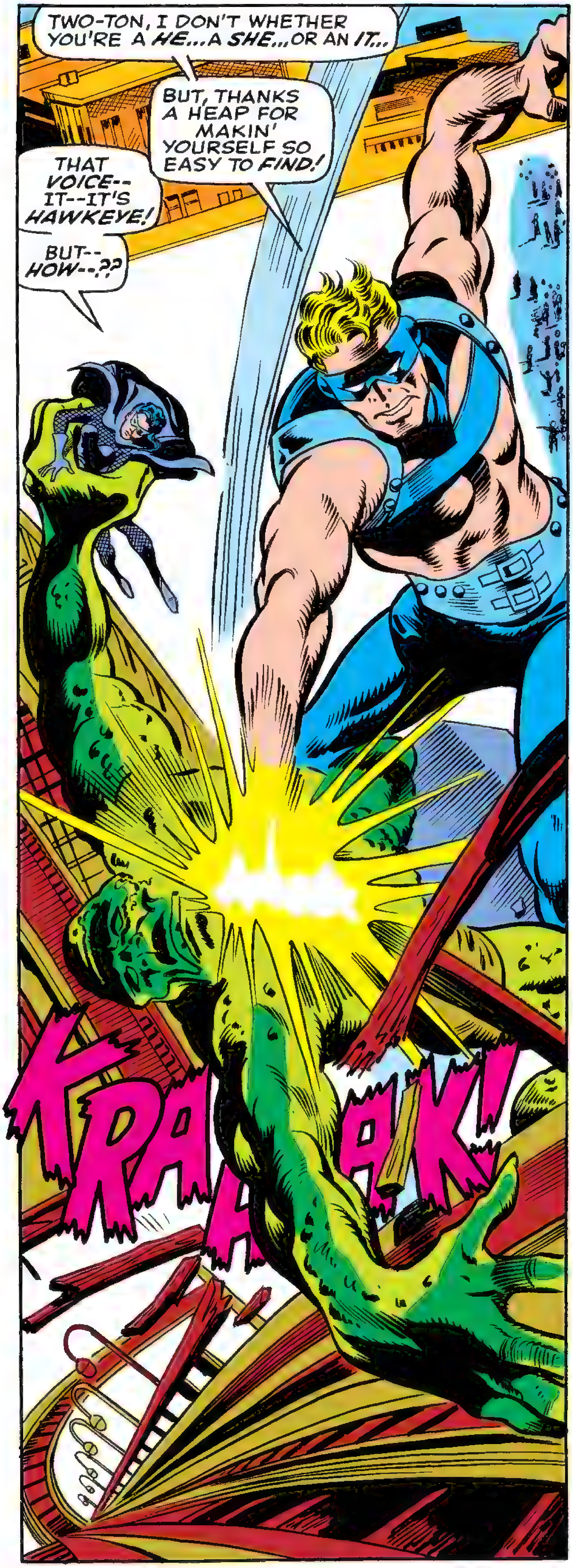

I'M A PRISONER... SOMEWHERE IN NEW YORK, I BELIEVE--BUT I DO NOT KNOW JUST WHERE!
WAIT! THEY'RE COMING FOR ME--MUST SIGN OFF NOW--!
THOSE BACKGROUND NOISES--COMIN' IN LOUD OVER HER RADIO!
MAYBE 'TASHA DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS--BUT I DO!
SHE'S BEIN' HELD CAPTIVE SOMEWHERE NEAR--CONEY ISLAND!
THE BLARIN' MUSIC... THE LAUGHIN' SCREAMS FROM THE ROLLER COASTER...
AND, THE DEAD GIVE-AWAY--THE HORN THAT STARTS OFF THE GO-KART RACES!
WELL, LADY, YOU MIGHT JUST GET YOURSELF RESCUED AFTER ALL--
NOT BY SOME NUT PLAYIN' ROBIN HOOD--
--BUT BY A REAL WALKIN', TALKIN' GIANT!
GUESS I HAD THIS IN MIND THE MINUTE HANK SAID HE WAS GIVIN' UP PLAYIN' GOLIATH!
HMMM... THESE THREADS WON'T WIN ANY PRIZES, BUT AT LEAST I CAN MOVE IN 'EM!
AND THIS SERUM OF HIS'LL NEVER REPLACE THE COKE BREAK!
BUT NOW TO SEE IF IT WORKS ON ANYBODY BESIDES BASHFUL BIO-CHEMISTS--!

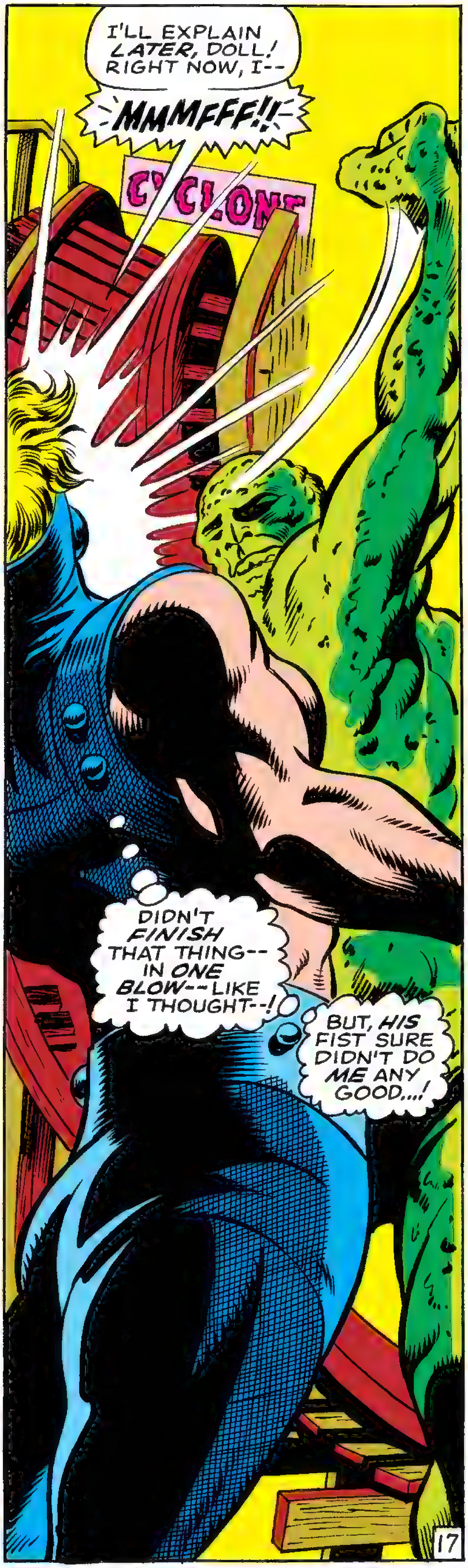

YEOWWW!
MY INSIDES! I FEEL LIKE SOMEBODY'S TEARIN' ME APART--
AND PUTTIN' ME BACK TOGETHER AGAIN-- AT THE SAME TIME!!
HOLY HANNAH!
I'M GROWING-- JUST LIKE I'VE SEEN OL' HANK DO A HUNDRED TIMES!
BUT, I NEVER KNEW I'D FEEL SO STRONG-- LIKE I CAN LICK THE WHOLE BLASTED UNIVERSE!
WHOEVER'S GOT NATASHA, THEY'D BETTER HOPE THEIR BLUE CROSS IS PAID UP--
'CAUSE LOOK OUT, WORLD--HERE COMES THE NEW GOLIATH!!

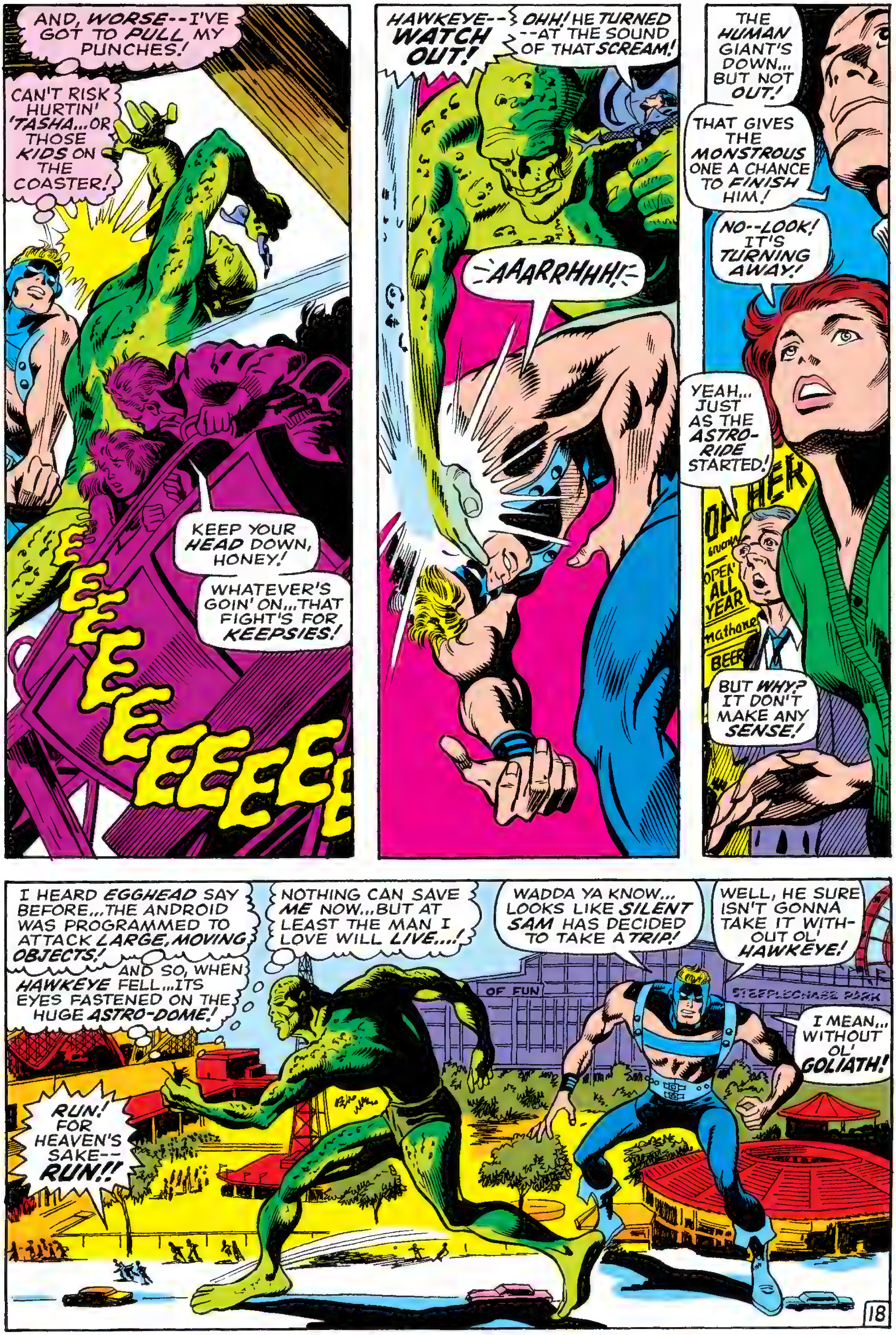

BUT NOW, A BRIEF LAPSE IN TIME AND SPACE TAKES US TO THE BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN, WHERE...
THERE IS A TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN, BLACK WIDOW...
WHICH, TAKEN AT THE FLOOD, LEADS ON TO FORTUNE!
IT PLEASES ME THAT YOU SHOULD LIVE TO SEE THAT FORTUNE FALL INTO THE WAITING HANDS OF... EGGHEAD!*
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN PARROTED PHRASES, YOU FOOL...
TO STOP BOTH SHIELD AND THE AVENGERS!
*LAST SEEN, LO THESE MANY ISSUES AGO, IN TALES TO ASTONISH #61! --STAN.
BUT, I STUDIED MORE THAN SHAKESPEARE IN THAT PRISON LIBRARY, MY DEAR!
I ALSO LEARNED MUCH ABOUT THE INTERCEPTION AND TRANSMISSION OF RADIO WAVES!
THAT IS HOW I JUST DUPLICATED THE SOUND AND IMAGE OF ONE... NICK FURY!
DON'T FORGET... IT WAS THE PUPPET MASTER WHO GAVE YOU THE IDEA!
WE THREE JOURNEYED HERE FROM THREE DIFFERENT PLACES FOR A MEETING OF THE MINDS!
LET'S GET ON WITH IT!
ALL RIGHT, EGGHEAD... SO YOU SENT THOSE ASSEMBLING MORONS ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE!
WAIT!
WHILE YOU TWO HAVE PLAYED AT IMPRESSING EACH OTHER...
IT TOOK THE ALERTNESS OF THE THINKER TO STOP ALL OUR PLANS FROM BEING RUINED...
THAT SAME THINKER WHOM AN INSANE WORLD CALLS MAD!
LOOK... IN THE SCANNER...!

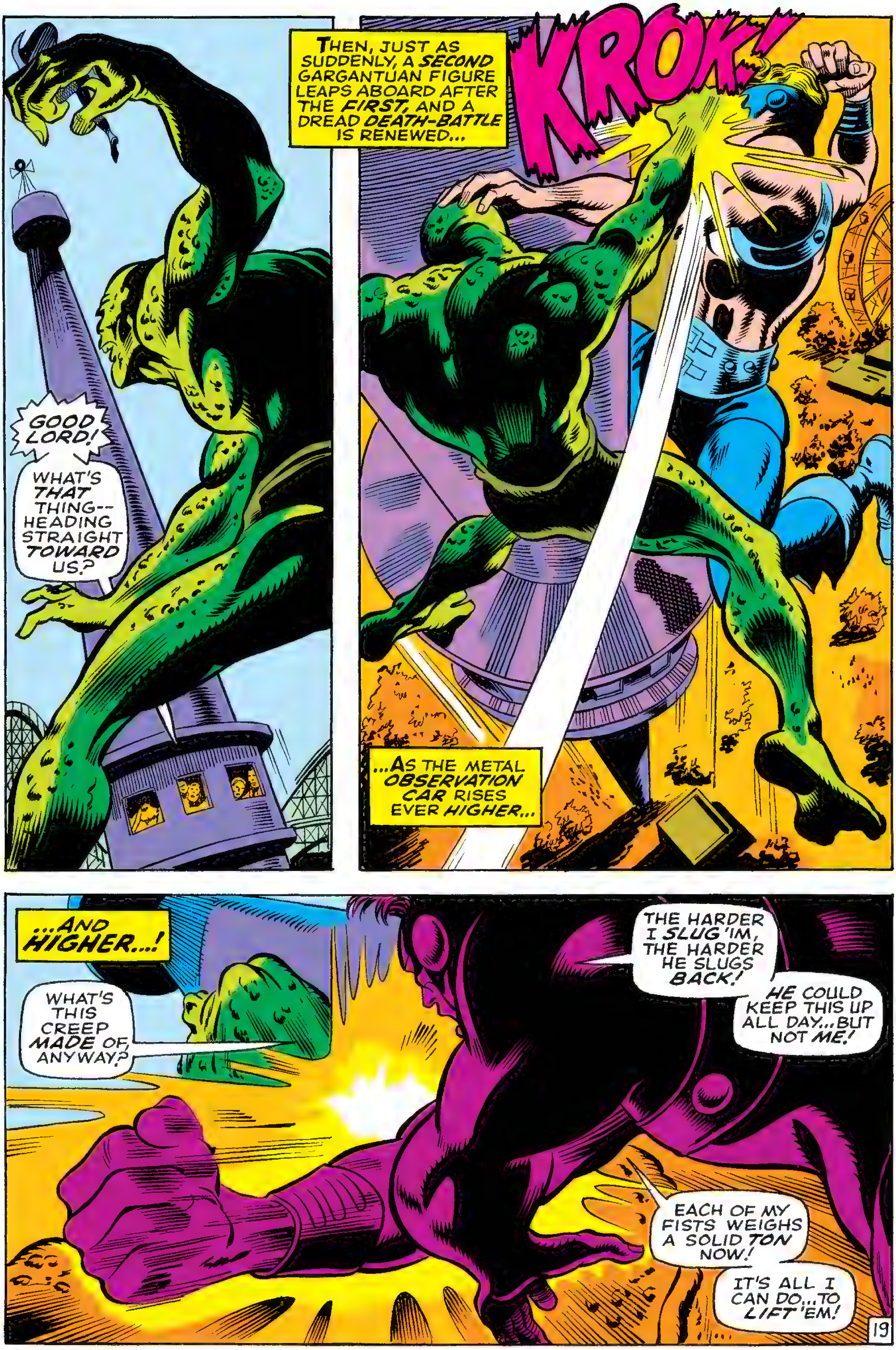

OUR WARNING SYSTEM... IT'S PICKED UP THE IMAGE OF A GIANT... HEADING OUR WAY ATOP AN ELEVATED TRAIN!
IT CAN ONLY BE MY OLD ENEMY HENRY PYM... WHO'S NOW CALLED GOLIATH!
A BRILLIANT DEDUCTION, MY FRIEND... BUT HERE'S A MORE VITAL ONE!
PROJECTION: AT PRESENT SPEED, HE WILL REACH THIS LOCATION IN 1.274 MINUTES!
BUT, DOES HE KNOW JUST WHERE WE ARE...
OR ONLY THAT WE ARE IN THIS VICINITY?
WE DARE TAKE NO CHANCES!
QUICKLY... WE MUST ACTIVATE OUR ANDROID!
OUR ANDROID?
IT WAS MY GENIUS ALONE WHICH DESIGNED THAT BRUTE!
WE'RE NOT TRYING TO STEAL YOUR PATENT, THINKER...
WE'RE JUST INTERESTED IN SAVING OURSELVES!
THEY SHALL NOT FAIL, PUPPET MASTER!
FOR, POWERED BY MY CONTROL PANEL, OUR ANDROID WILL MATCH GOLIATH'S SIZE...
...AND SURPASS HIM IN SHEER STRENGTH!
MY HONORED FOE SHALL FIND NOT FRIVOLITY AT CONEY ISLAND... BUT DEATH!
OUR PLANS CAN'T FAIL NOW... ON THE VERY EVE OF SUCCESS!

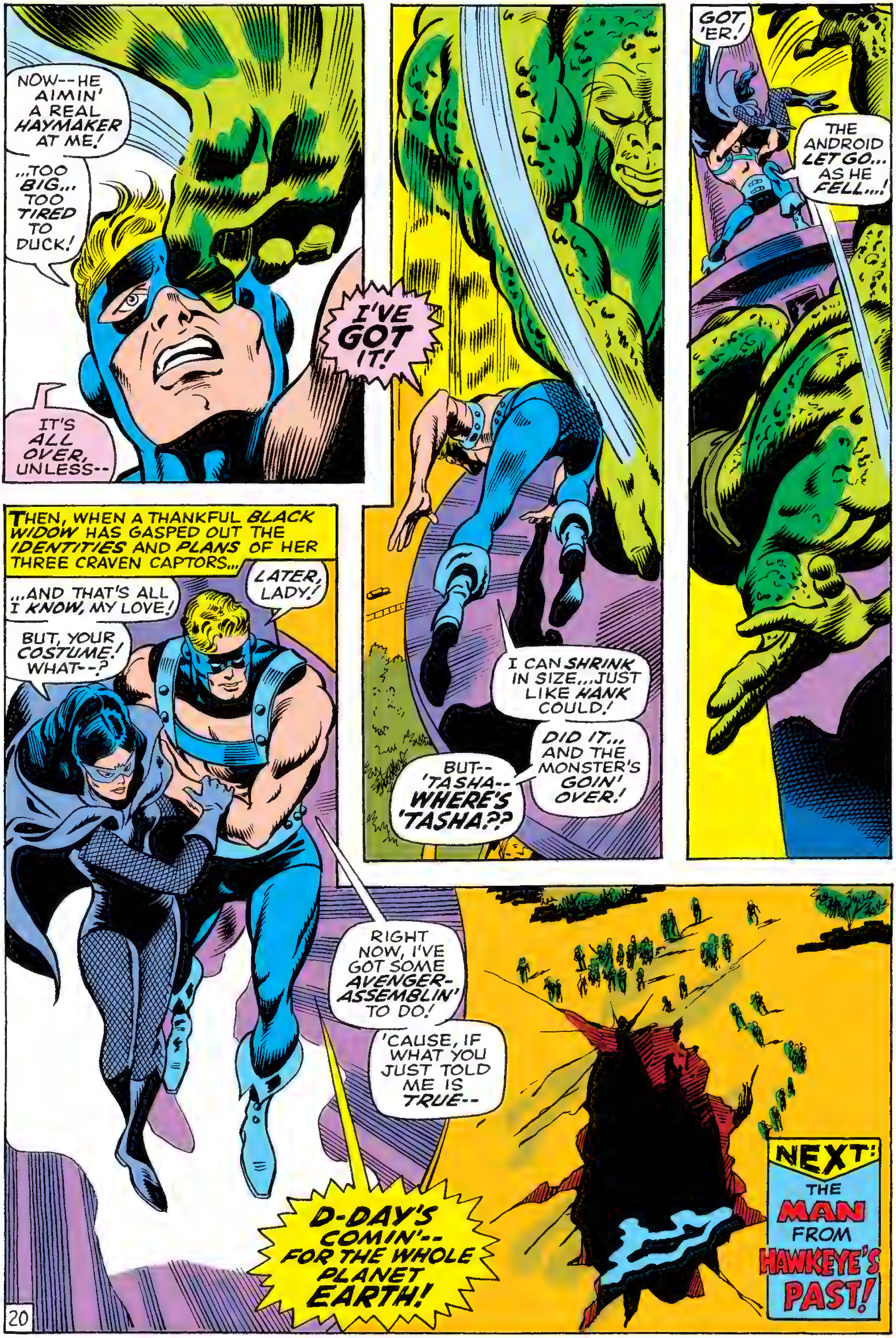

THUS IT IS THAT, SECONDS LATER, EVEN AS STARTLED *CROWDS* AT CONEY ISLAND GAPE IN AWE AT THE SIGHT OF THE NEW *GOLIATH...*
HOLY HANNAH!
IT'S SOME KIND'A *MONSTER*-- AS BIG AS *ME*--
AND IN HIS OVERGROWN PAW HE'S GOT-- *NATASHA!*
WONDER WHEEL
IDDIE
PARK
HELP! HELP!
WONDE
EST WHEEL
FIREWORK
SDAY 9P.M.
A *MASTER STROKE,* EGGHEAD!
SURELY, THE AVENGER WILL RUSH TO THE FAIR LADY'S *RESCUE*...TO HIS OWN *DOOM!*
YES... WHILE WE RETIRE TO A *SAFER* PLACE!
IN SHORT, THE MEETING IS NOW *ADJOURNED...!*


TWO-TON, I DON'T WHETHER YOU'RE A *HE*...A *SHE*...OR AN *IT*...
BUT, THANKS A HEAP FOR MAKIN' YOURSELF SO EASY TO *FIND!*
THAT *VOICE*-- IT--IT'S *HAWKEYE!*
BUT-- *HOW*--??
KRAAAK!

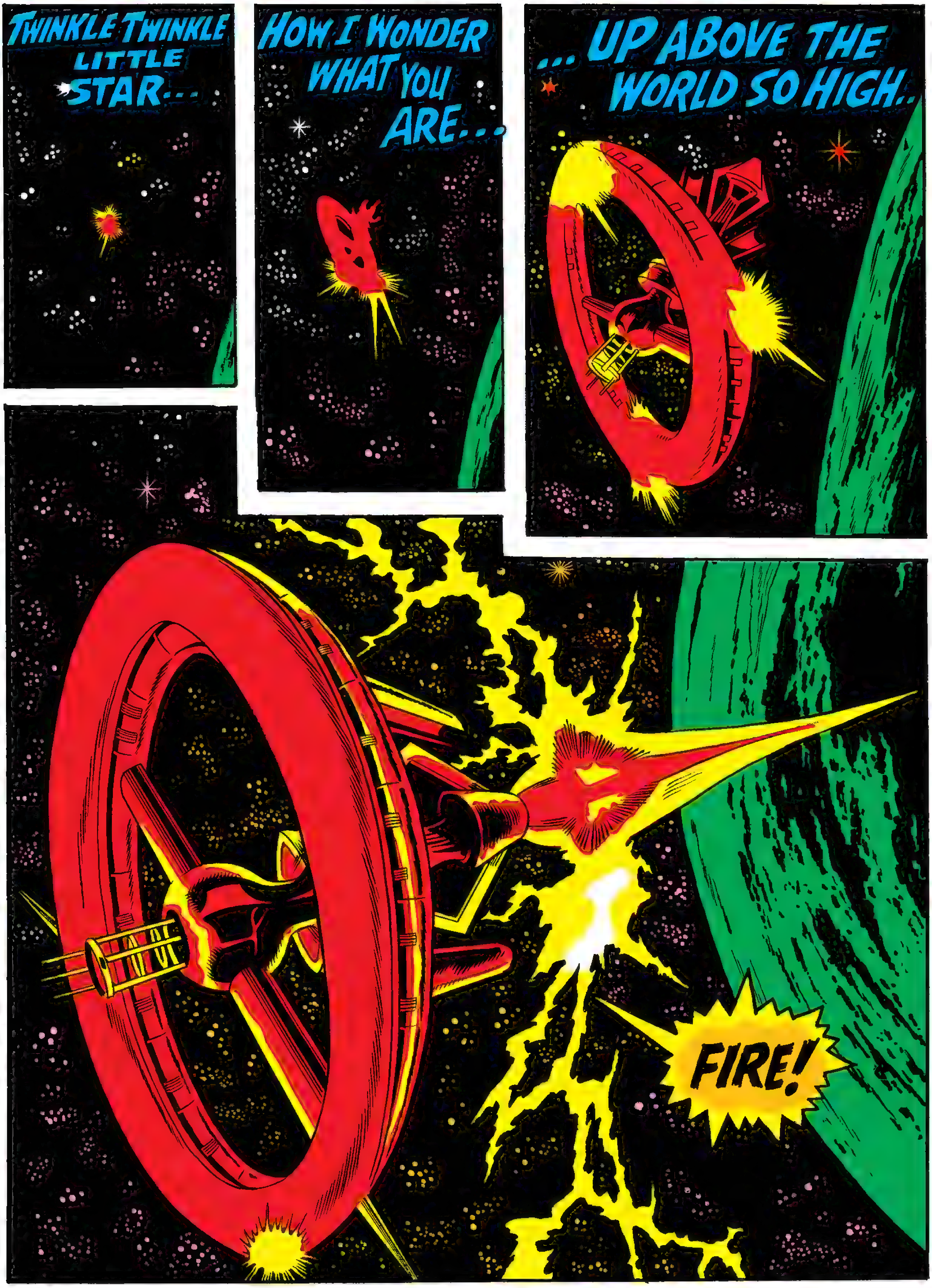

I'LL EXPLAIN *LATER*, DOLL! RIGHT NOW, I--
MMMFFF!!
CYCLONE
DIDN'T *FINISH* THAT THING-- IN *ONE BLOW*--LIKE I THOUGHT--!
BUT, *HIS* FIST SURE DIDN'T DO *ME* ANY GOOD...!

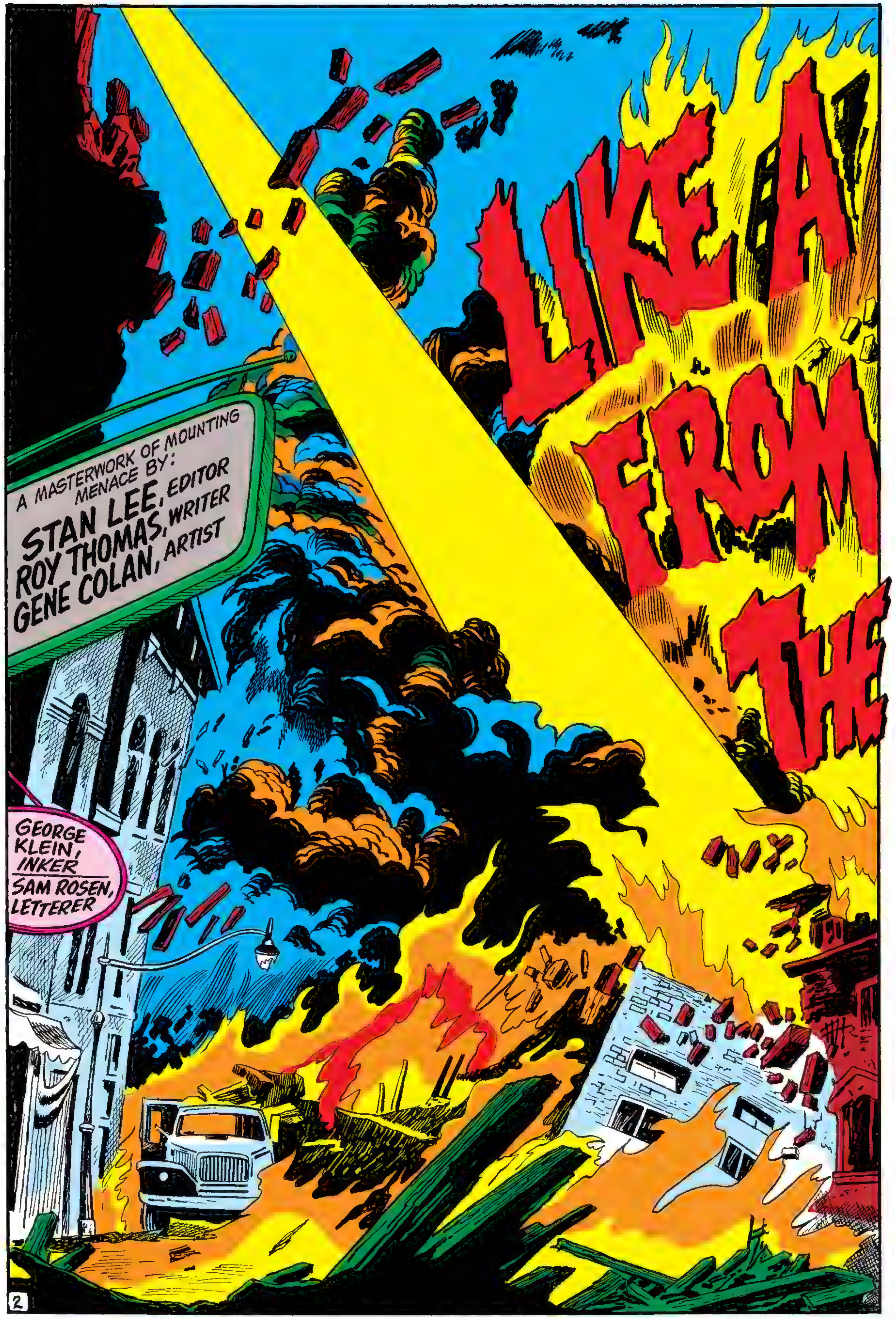

AND, WORSE--I'VE GOT TO PULL MY PUNCHES!
CAN'T RISK HURTIN' 'TASHA...OR THOSE KIDS ON THE COASTER!
KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN, HONEY!
WHATEVER'S GOIN' ON...THAT FIGHT'S FOR KEEPSIES!
EEEEEEEEEEEE
HAWKEYE-- WATCH OUT!
OHH! HE TURNED --AT THE SOUND OF THAT SCREAM!
AAARRHHH!
THE HUMAN GIANT'S DOWN... BUT NOT OUT!
THAT GIVES THE MONSTROUS ONE A CHANCE TO FINISH HIM!
NO--LOOK! IT'S TURNING AWAY!
YEAH... JUST AS THE ASTRO-RIDE STARTED!
BUT WHY? IT DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE!
ON HER
OPEN ALL YEAR
BEER
I HEARD EGGHEAD SAY BEFORE...THE ANDROID WAS PROGRAMMED TO ATTACK LARGE, MOVING OBJECTS! AND SO, WHEN HAWKEYE FELL...ITS EYES FASTENED ON THE HUGE ASTRO-DOME!
NOTHING CAN SAVE ME NOW...BUT AT LEAST THE MAN I LOVE WILL LIVE...!
WADDA YA KNOW... LOOKS LIKE SILENT SAM HAS DECIDED TO TAKE A TRIP!
WELL, HE SURE ISN'T GONNA TAKE IT WITHOUT OL' HAWKEYE!
I MEAN... WITHOUT OL' GOLIATH!
RUN! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE-- RUN!!
OF FUN
STEEPLECHASE PARK

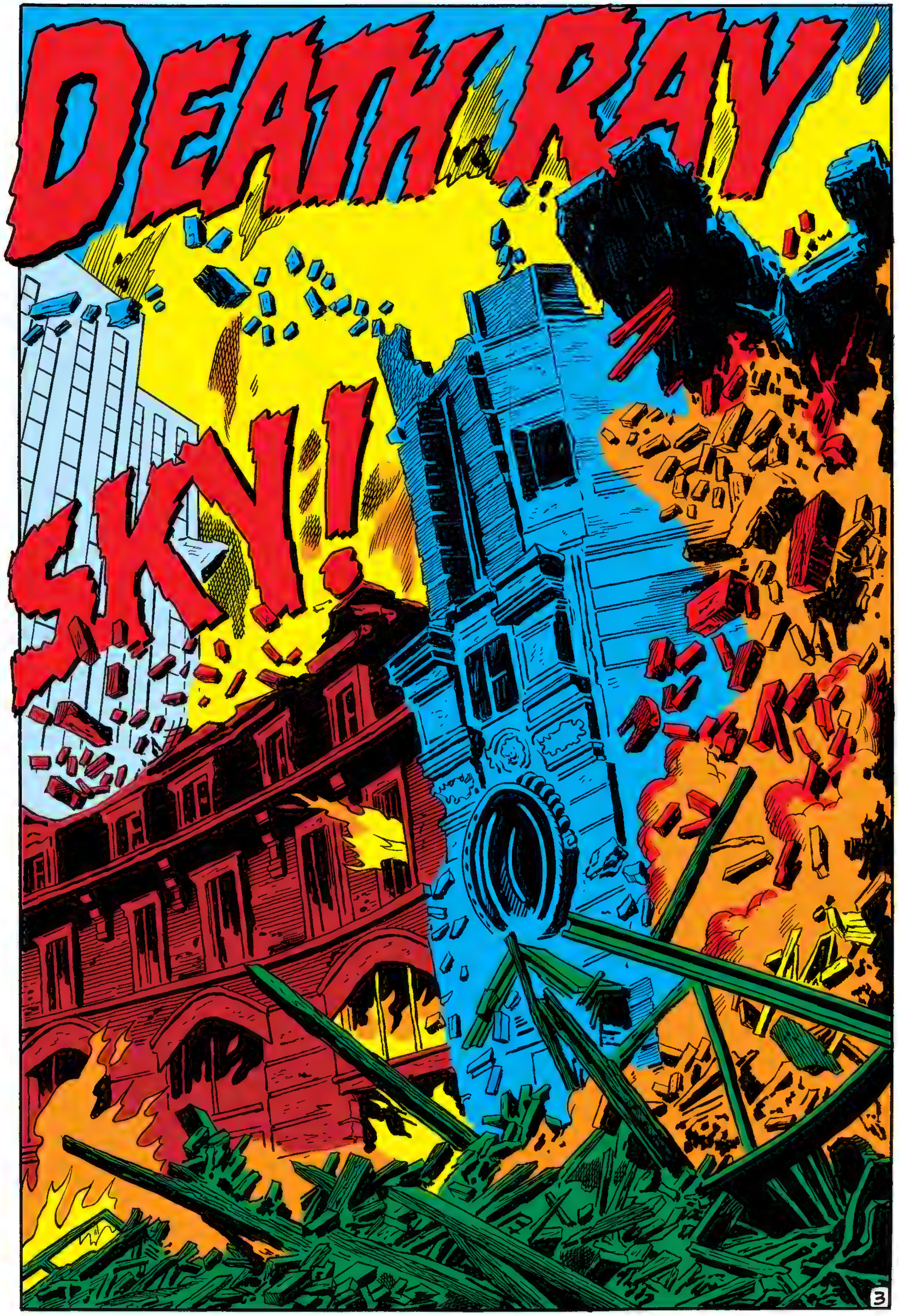

GOOD LORD!
WHAT'S *THAT* THING-- HEADING STRAIGHT *TOWARD* US?
THEN, JUST AS SUDDENLY, A *SECOND* GARGANTUAN FIGURE LEAPS ABOARD AFTER THE *FIRST,* AND A DREAD *DEATH-BATTLE* IS RENEWED...
KROK!
...AS THE METAL *OBSERVATION CAR* RISES EVER *HIGHER*...
...AND *HIGHER*...!
WHAT'S THIS CREEP *MADE* OF, ANYWAY?
THE HARDER I *SLUG* 'IM, THE HARDER HE SLUGS *BACK!*
HE COULD KEEP THIS UP ALL DAY...BUT NOT *ME!*
EACH OF MY FISTS WEIGHS A SOLID *TON* NOW!
IT'S ALL I CAN DO...TO *LIFT* 'EM!

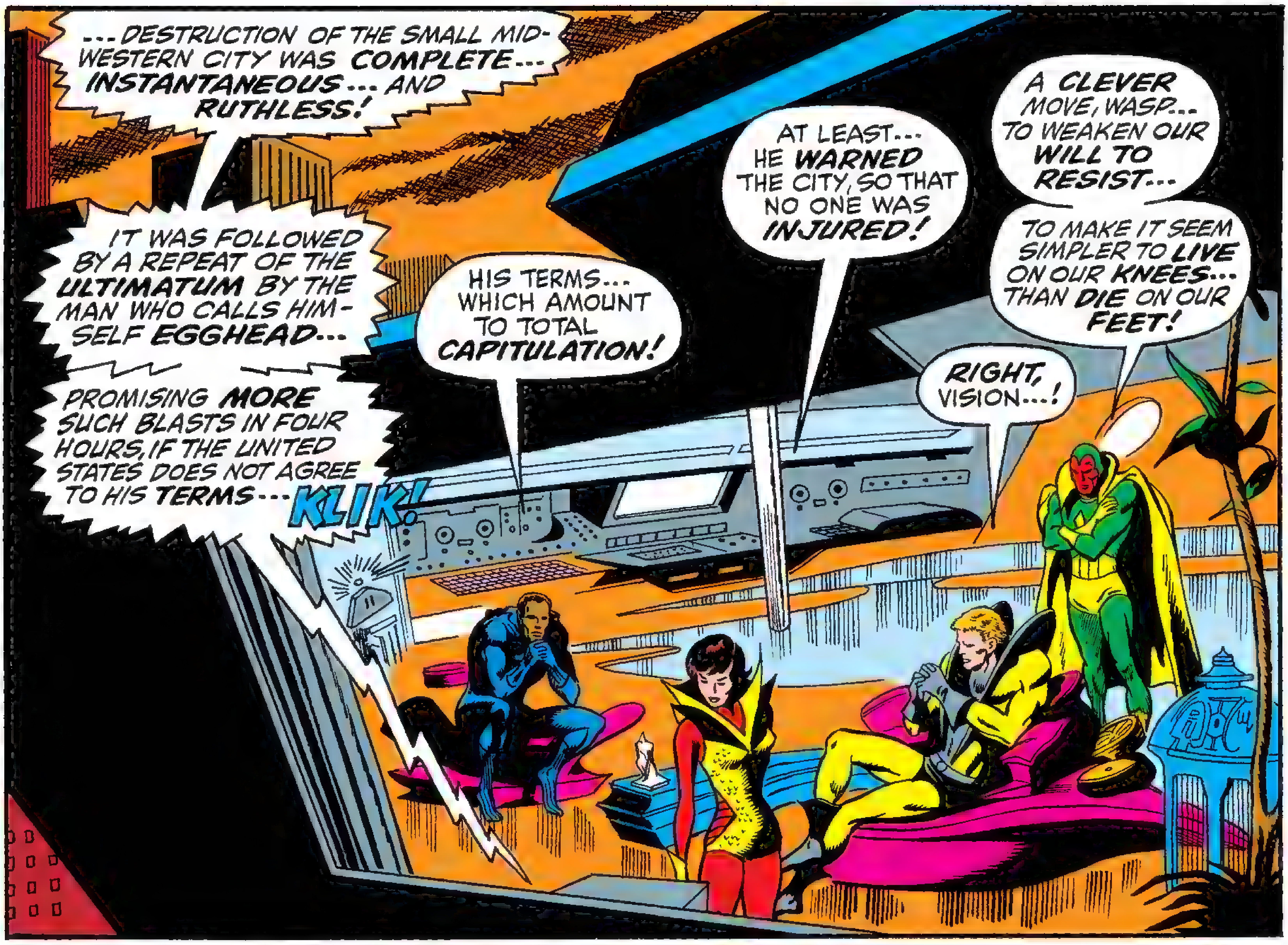

NOW--HE AIMIN' A REAL *HAYMAKER* AT ME!
...TOO *BIG*... TOO *TIRED* TO DUCK!
IT'S *ALL OVER*, UNLESS--
I'VE GOT IT!
I CAN *SHRINK* IN SIZE... JUST LIKE *HANK* COULD!
DID IT... AND THE MONSTER'S *GOIN' OVER!*
BUT-- *'TASHA*-- *WHERE'S 'TASHA??*
GOT 'ER!
THE ANDROID *LET GO*... AS HE *FELL*...!
THEN, WHEN A THANKFUL *BLACK WIDOW* HAS GASPED OUT THE *IDENTITIES* AND *PLANS* OF HER THREE CRAVEN CAPTORS...
...AND THAT'S ALL I *KNOW*, MY LOVE!
LATER, LADY!
BUT, YOUR *COSTUME!* WHAT--?
RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT SOME *AVENGER-ASSEMBLIN'* TO DO!
'CAUSE, IF WHAT YOU JUST TOLD ME IS *TRUE*--
D-DAY'S COMIN'-- FOR THE WHOLE PLANET EARTH!
NEXT: THE MAN FROM HAWKEYE'S PAST!

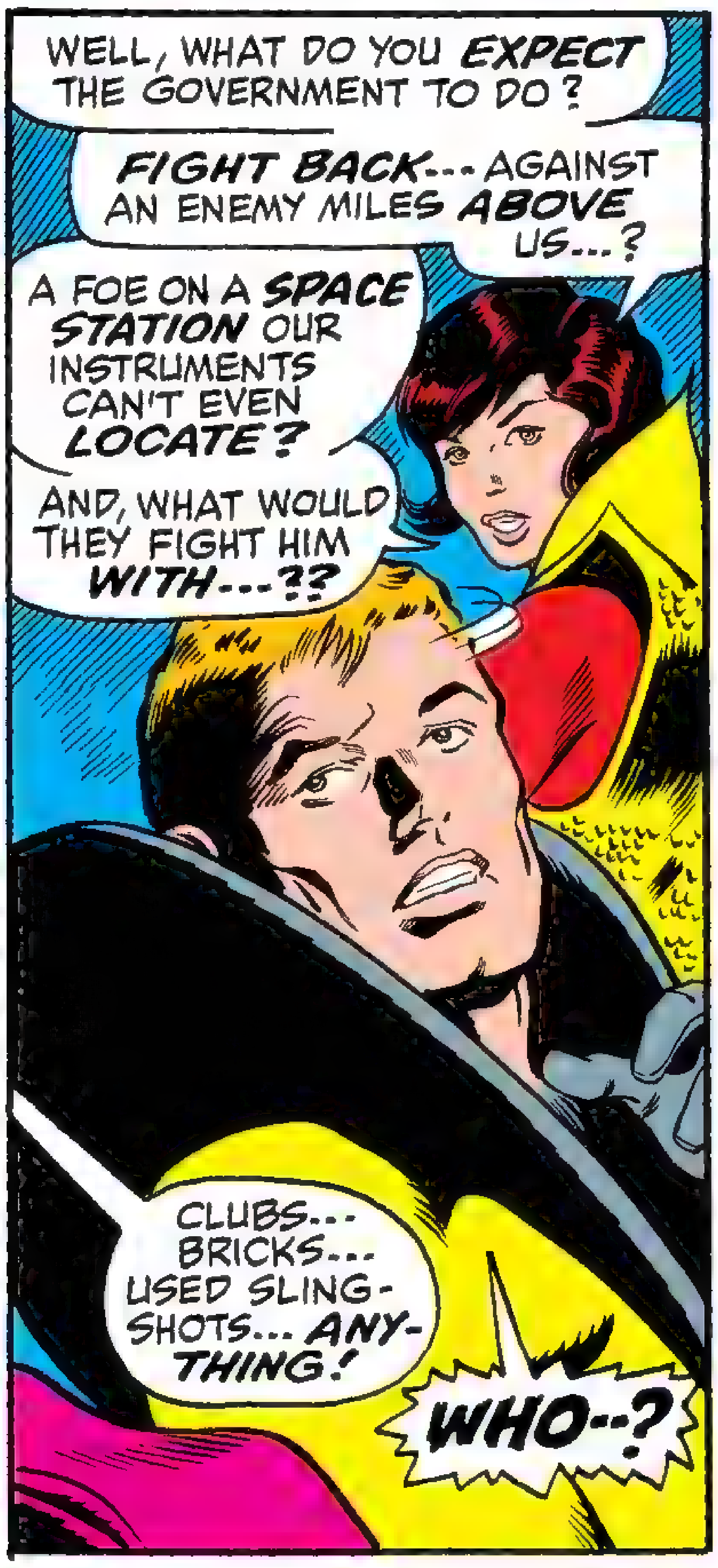
AVENGERS #64 (MAY 1969)

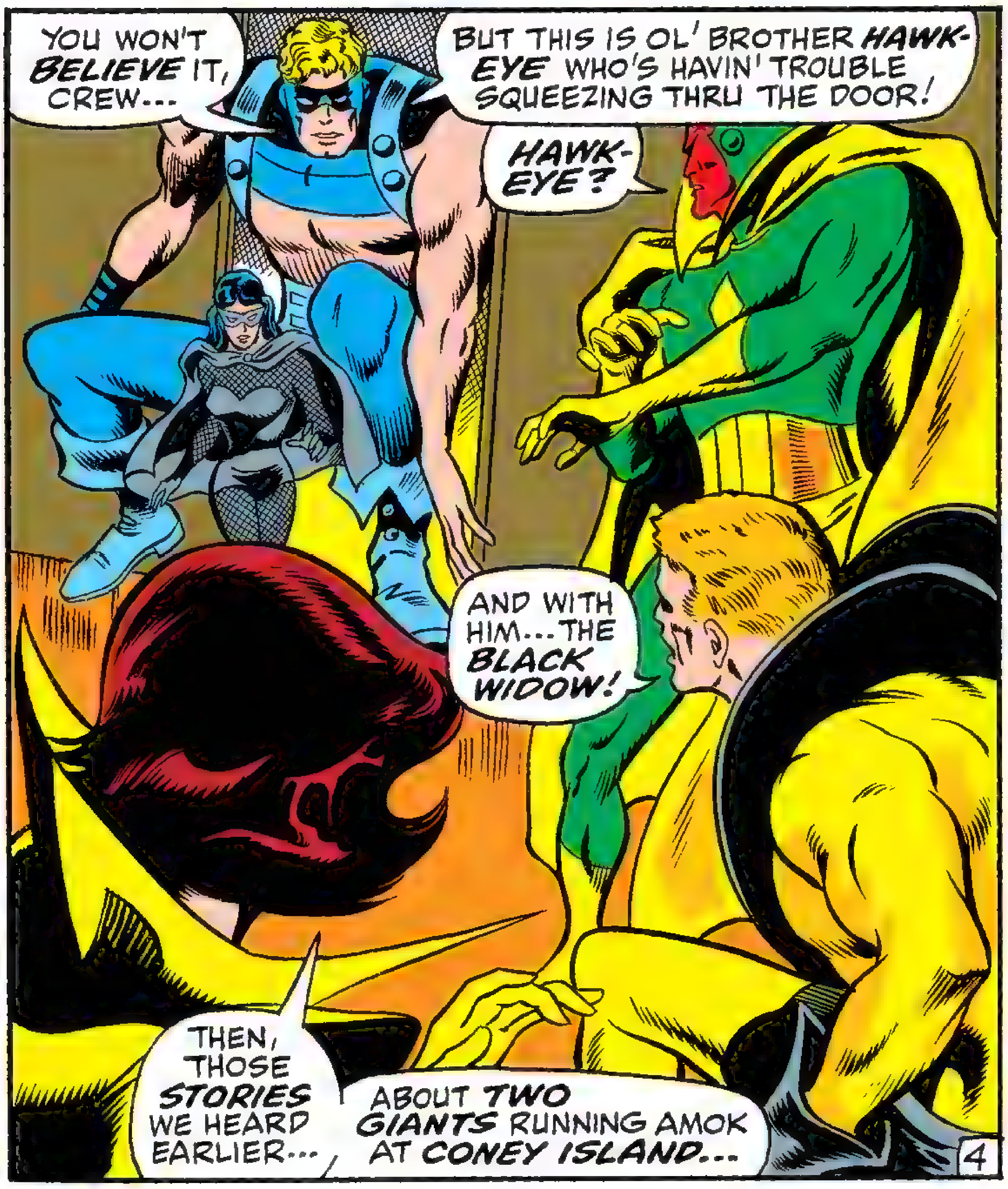

TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR...
HOW I WONDER WHAT YOU ARE...
... UP ABOVE THE WORLD SO HIGH..
FIRE!

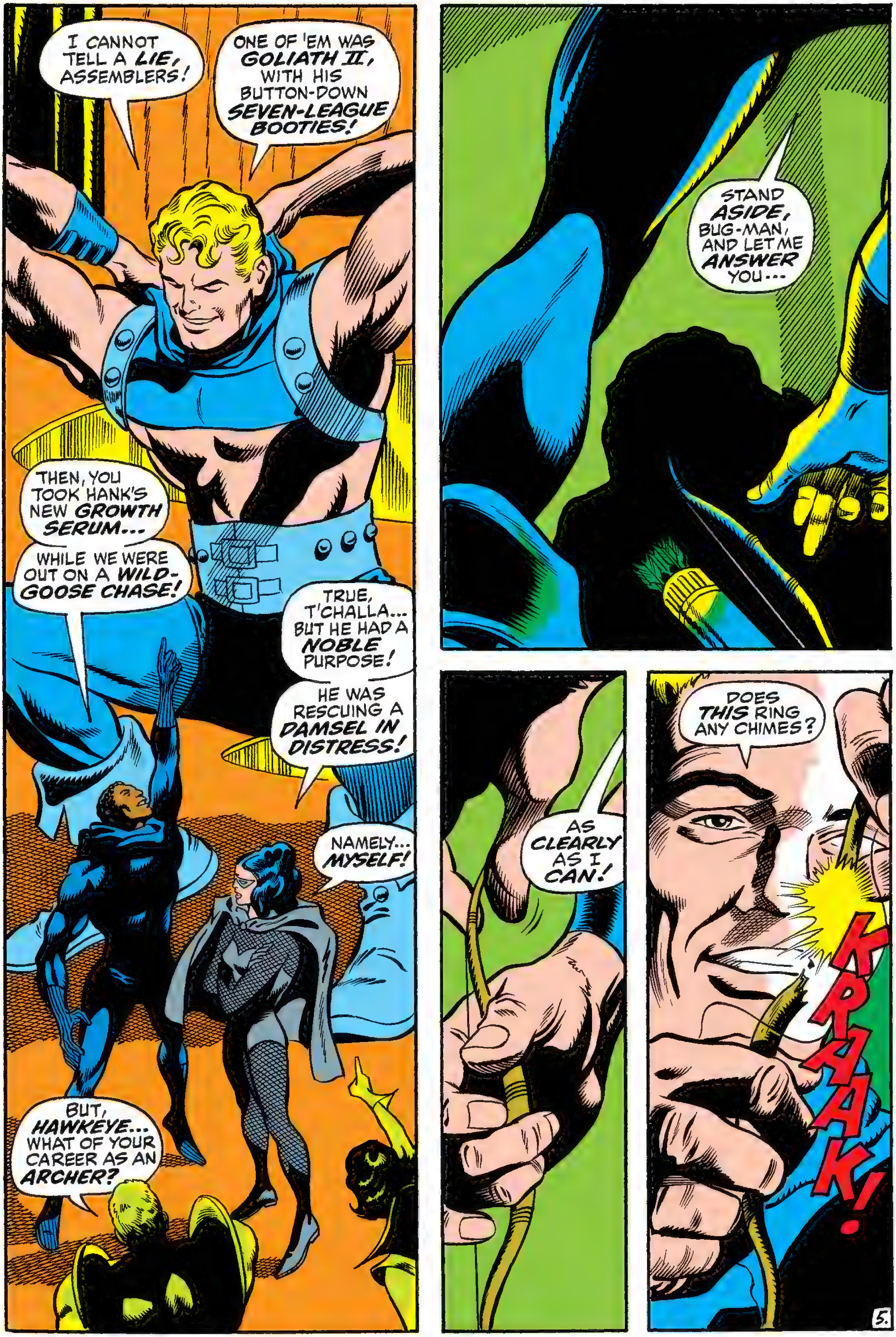

LIKE A
FROM
THE
A MASTERWORK OF MOUNTING MENACE BY:
STAN LEE, EDITOR
ROY THOMAS, WRITER
GENE COLAN, ARTIST
GEORGE KLEIN, INKER
SAM ROSEN, LETTERER

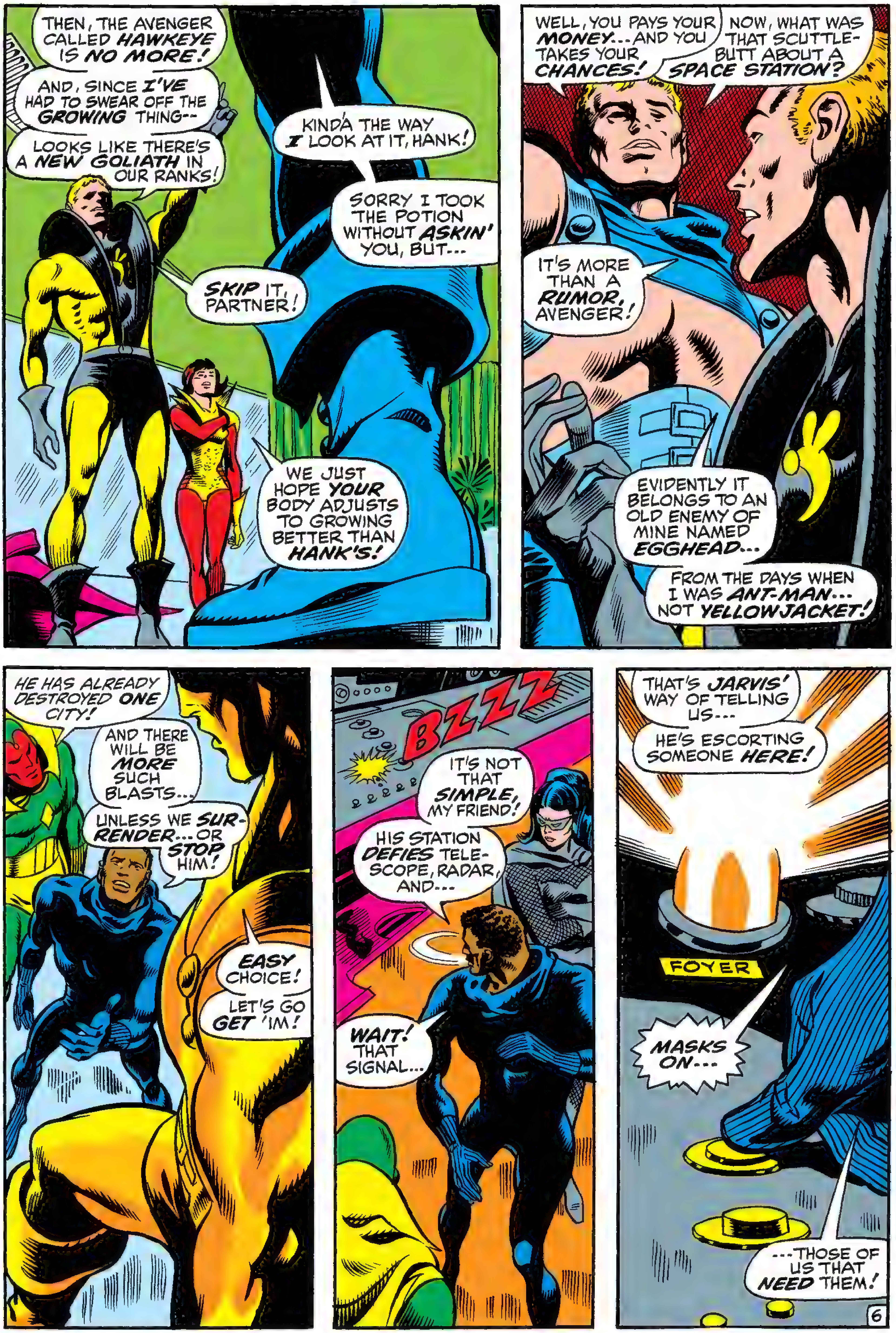

DEATH RAY
SKY!

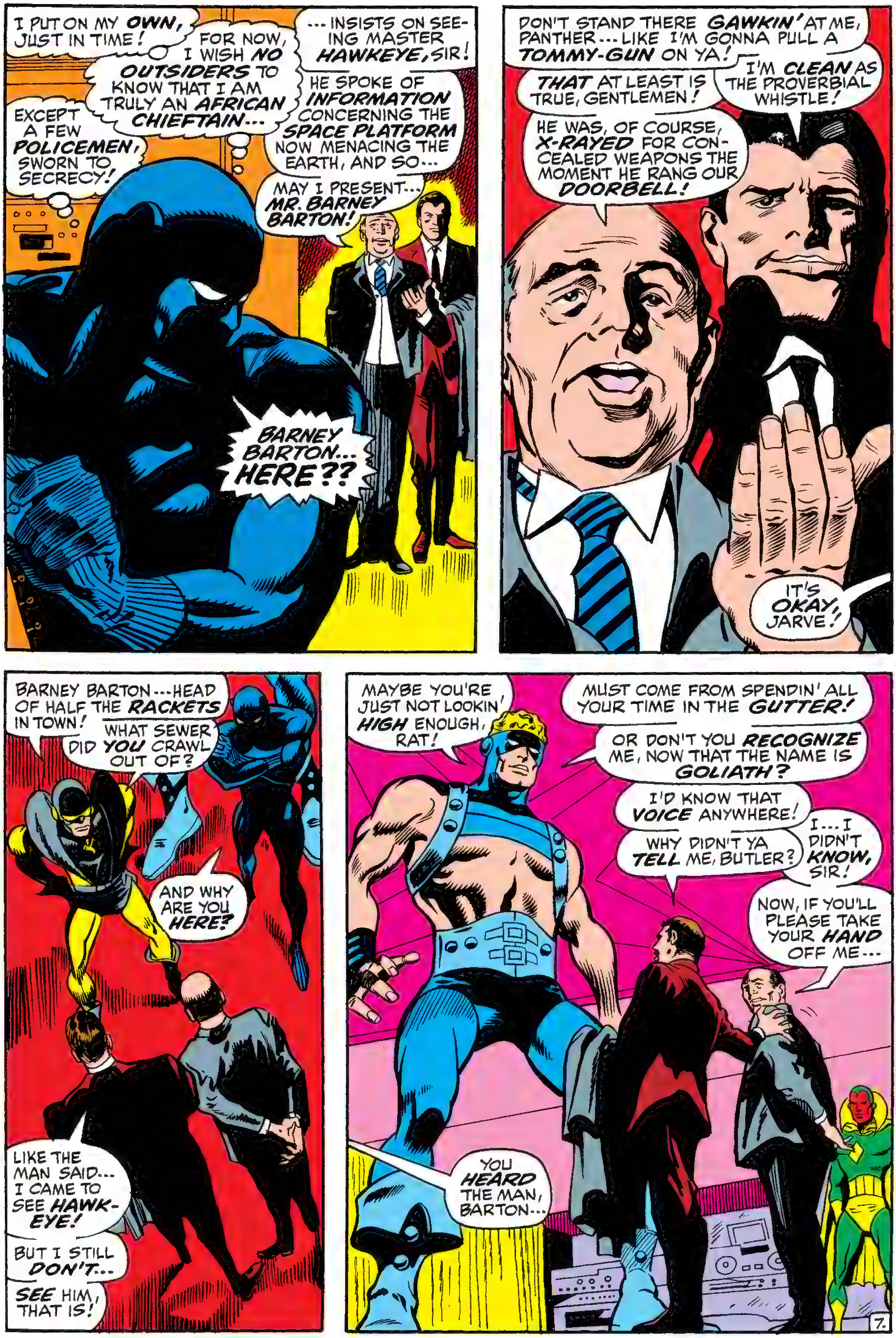

...DESTRUCTION OF THE SMALL MID-WESTERN CITY WAS **COMPLETE**... **INSTANTANEOUS**... AND **RUTHLESS!**
IT WAS FOLLOWED BY A REPEAT OF THE **ULTIMATUM** BY THE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF **EGGHEAD...**
PROMISING **MORE** SUCH BLASTS IN FOUR HOURS, IF THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT AGREE TO HIS **TERMS**---
KLIK!
HIS TERMS... WHICH AMOUNT TO TOTAL **CAPITULATION!**
AT LEAST... HE **WARNED** THE CITY, SO THAT NO ONE WAS **INJURED!**
A **CLEVER** MOVE, WASP... TO WEAKEN OUR **WILL TO RESIST...**
TO MAKE IT SEEM SIMPLER TO **LIVE** ON OUR **KNEES...** THAN **DIE** ON OUR **FEET!**
RIGHT, VISION...!

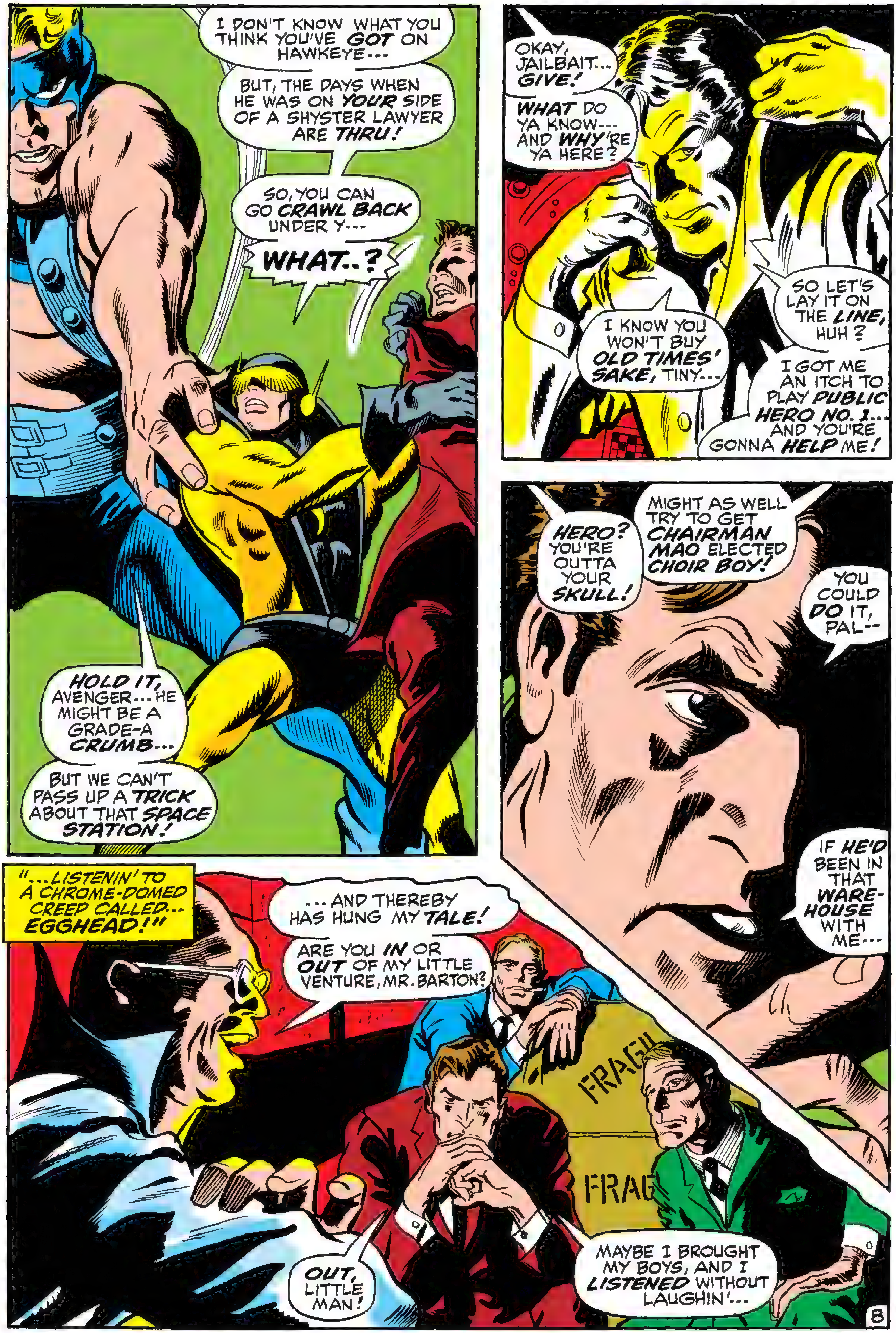

WELL, WHAT DO YOU **EXPECT** THE GOVERNMENT TO DO?
FIGHT BACK--- AGAINST AN ENEMY MILES **ABOVE** US...?
A FOE ON A **SPACE STATION** OUR INSTRUMENTS CAN'T EVEN **LOCATE?**
AND, WHAT WOULD THEY FIGHT HIM **WITH...??**
CLUBS... BRICKS... USED SLING-SHOTS... **ANYTHING!**
WHO--?

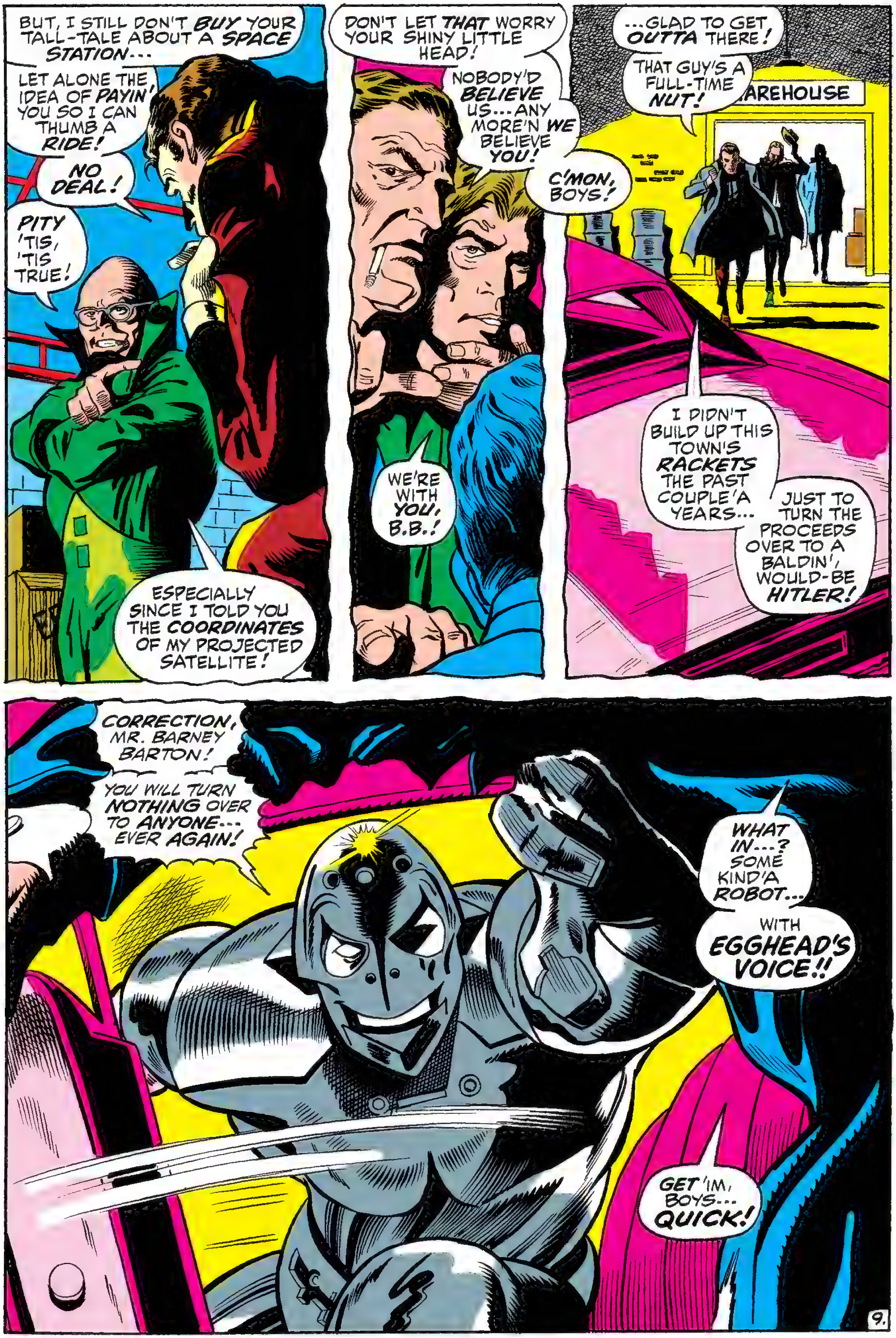

YOU WON'T **BELIEVE** IT, CREW...
BUT THIS IS OL' BROTHER **HAWKEYE** WHO'S HAVIN' TROUBLE SQUEEZING THRU THE DOOR!
HAWKEYE?
AND WITH HIM... THE **BLACK WIDOW!**
THEN, THOSE **STORIES** WE HEARD EARLIER...
ABOUT **TWO GIANTS** RUNNING AMOK AT **CONEY ISLAND...**

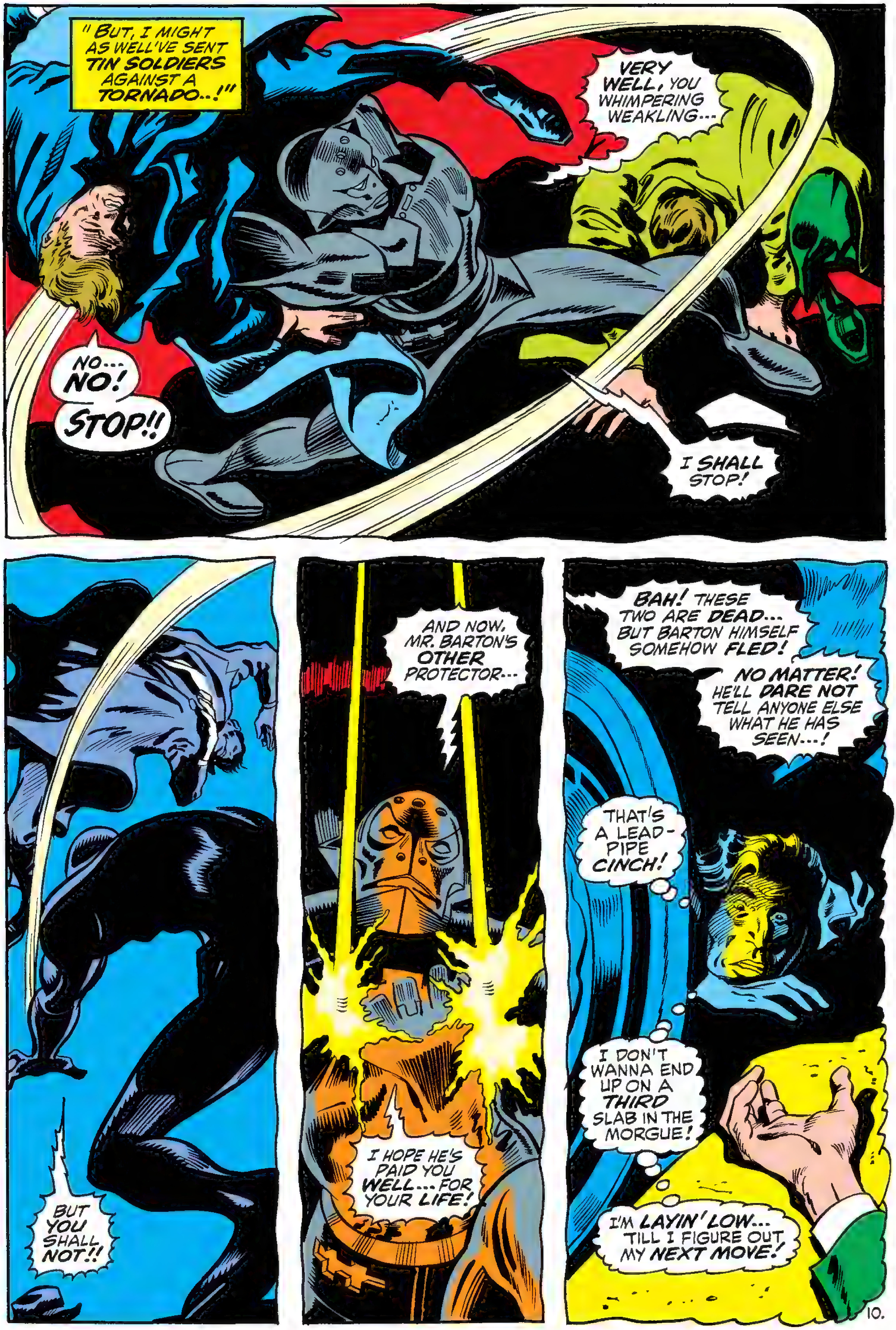

I CANNOT TELL A *LIE*, ASSEMBLERS!
ONE OF 'EM WAS *GOLIATH II*, WITH HIS BUTTON-DOWN *SEVEN-LEAGUE BOOTIES!*
THEN, YOU TOOK HANK'S NEW *GROWTH SERUM...*
WHILE WE WERE OUT ON A *WILD-GOOSE CHASE!*
TRUE, T'CHALLA... BUT HE HAD A *NOBLE* PURPOSE!
HE WAS RESCUING A *DAMSEL IN DISTRESS!*
NAMELY... *MYSELF!*
BUT, *HAWKEYE...* WHAT OF YOUR CAREER AS AN *ARCHER?*
STAND *ASIDE*, BUG-MAN, AND LET ME *ANSWER* YOU...
AS *CLEARLY* AS I *CAN!*
DOES *THIS* RING ANY CHIMES?
KRAAAK!

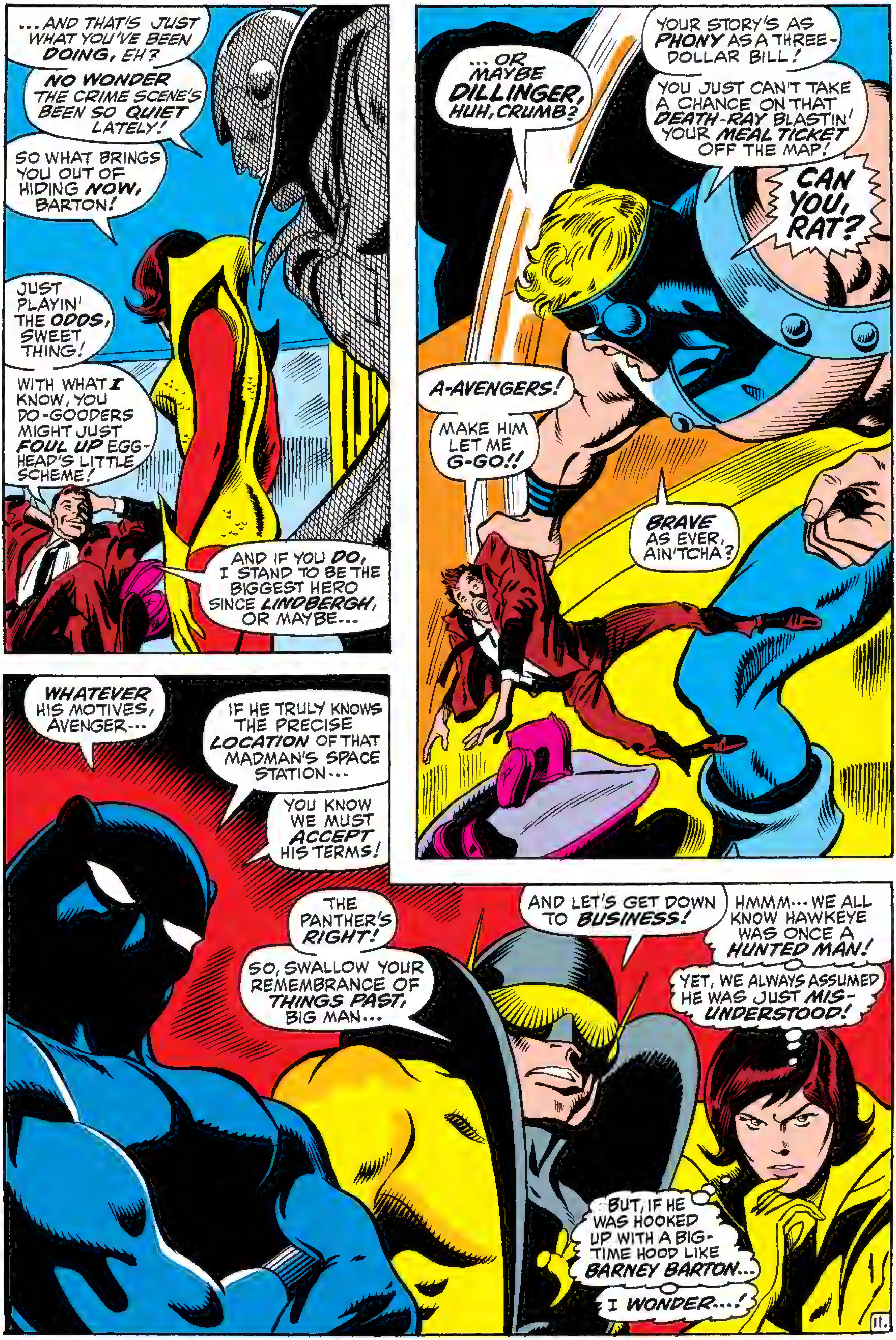

THEN, THE AVENGER CALLED **HAWKEYE** IS **NO MORE!**
AND, SINCE **I'VE** HAD TO SWEAR OFF THE **GROWING** THING--
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A **NEW GOLIATH** IN OUR RANKS!
KIND'A THE WAY **I** LOOK AT IT, HANK!
SORRY I TOOK THE POTION WITHOUT **ASKIN'** YOU, BUT...
SKIP IT, PARTNER!
WE JUST HOPE **YOUR** BODY ADJUSTS TO GROWING BETTER THAN **HANK'S!**
WELL, YOU PAYS YOUR **MONEY**... AND YOU TAKES YOUR **CHANCES!**
NOW, WHAT WAS THAT SCUTTLE-BUTT ABOUT A **SPACE STATION?**
IT'S MORE THAN A **RUMOR**, AVENGER!
EVIDENTLY IT BELONGS TO AN OLD ENEMY OF MINE NAMED **EGGHEAD**...
FROM THE DAYS WHEN I WAS **ANT-MAN**... NOT **YELLOWJACKET!**
HE HAS ALREADY DESTROYED **ONE** CITY!
AND THERE WILL BE **MORE** SUCH BLASTS...
UNLESS WE **SURRENDER**... OR **STOP** HIM!
EASY CHOICE!
LET'S GO **GET** 'IM!
BZZZ
IT'S NOT THAT **SIMPLE**, MY FRIEND!
HIS STATION **DEFIES** TELESCOPE, RADAR, AND...
WAIT! THAT SIGNAL...
THAT'S **JARVIS'** WAY OF TELLING US...
HE'S ESCORTING SOMEONE **HERE!**
FOYER
MASKS ON...
...THOSE OF US THAT **NEED** THEM!

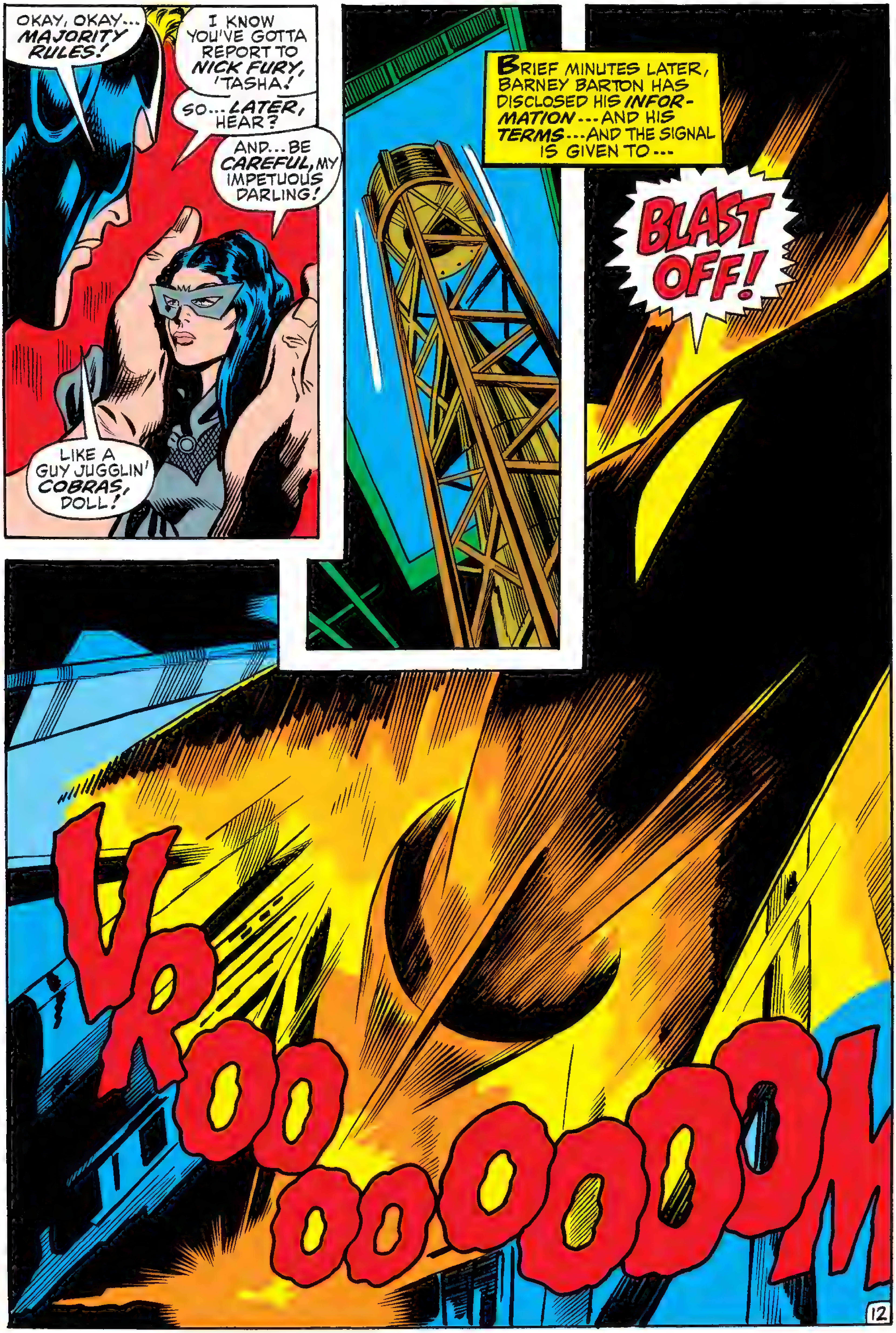

I PUT ON MY **OWN**, JUST IN TIME!
FOR NOW, I WISH **NO OUTSIDERS** TO KNOW THAT I AM TRULY AN **AFRICAN CHIEFTAIN**...
EXCEPT A FEW **POLICEMEN**, SWORN TO SECRECY!
... INSISTS ON SEEING MASTER **HAWKEYE**, SIR!
HE SPOKE OF **INFORMATION** CONCERNING THE **SPACE PLATFORM** NOW MENACING THE EARTH, AND SO...
MAY I PRESENT... **MR. BARNEY BARTON!**
BARNEY BARTON... HERE??
DON'T STAND THERE **GAWKIN'** AT ME, PANTHER... LIKE I'M GONNA PULL A **TOMMY-GUN** ON YA!
THAT AT LEAST IS TRUE, GENTLEMEN!
I'M **CLEAN** AS THE PROVERBIAL WHISTLE!
HE WAS, OF COURSE, **X-RAYED** FOR CONCEALED WEAPONS THE MOMENT HE RANG OUR **DOORBELL!**
IT'S **OKAY**, JARVE!
BARNEY BARTON... HEAD OF HALF THE **RACKETS** IN TOWN!
WHAT SEWER DID **YOU** CRAWL OUT OF?
AND WHY ARE YOU **HERE?**
LIKE THE MAN SAID... I CAME TO SEE **HAWKEYE!**
BUT I STILL **DON'T**...
SEE HIM, THAT IS!
MAYBE YOU'RE JUST NOT LOOKIN' **HIGH** ENOUGH, RAT!
MUST COME FROM SPENDIN' ALL YOUR TIME IN THE **GUTTER!**
OR DON'T YOU **RECOGNIZE** ME, NOW THAT THE NAME IS **GOLIATH?**
I'D KNOW THAT **VOICE** ANYWHERE!
WHY DIDN'T YA **TELL** ME, BUTLER?
I... I DIDN'T **KNOW**, SIR!
NOW, IF YOU'LL PLEASE TAKE YOUR **HAND** OFF ME...
YOU **HEARD** THE MAN, BARTON...

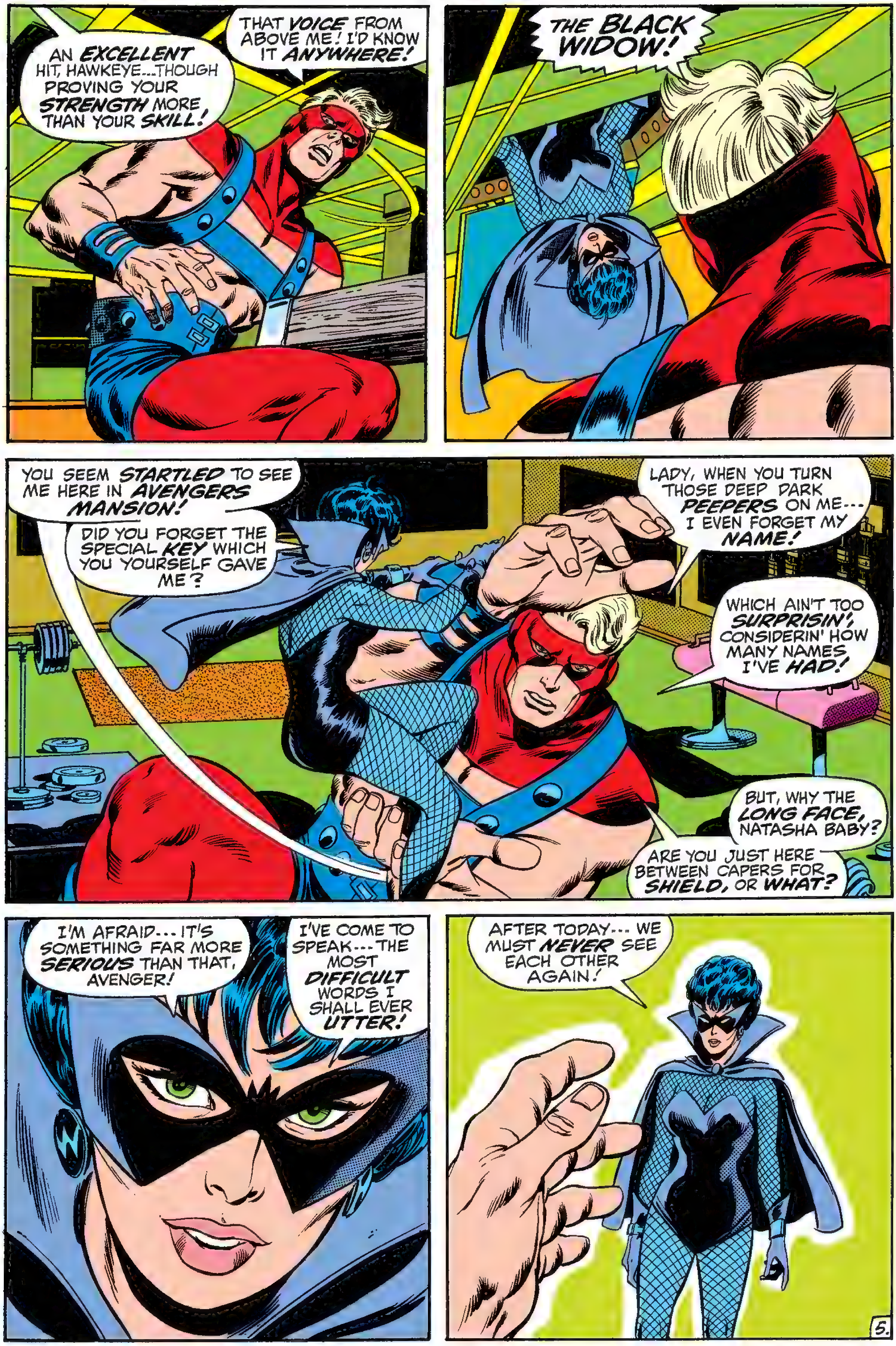

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT ON HAWKEYE---
BUT, THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS ON YOUR SIDE OF A SHYSTER LAWYER ARE THRU!
SO, YOU CAN GO CRAWL BACK UNDER Y---
WHAT..?
HOLD IT, AVENGER...HE MIGHT BE A GRADE-A CRUMB...
BUT WE CAN'T PASS UP A TRICK ABOUT THAT SPACE STATION!
OKAY, JAILBAIT... GIVE!
WHAT DO YA KNOW... AND WHY'RE YA HERE?
I KNOW YOU WON'T BUY OLD TIMES' SAKE, TINY...
SO LET'S LAY IT ON THE LINE, HUH?
I GOT ME AN ITCH TO PLAY PUBLIC HERO NO. 1... AND YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME!
HERO? YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR SKULL!
MIGHT AS WELL TRY TO GET CHAIRMAN MAO ELECTED CHOIR BOY!
YOU COULD DO IT, PAL--
IF HE'D BEEN IN THAT WARE-HOUSE WITH ME...
MAYBE I BROUGHT MY BOYS, AND I LISTENED WITHOUT LAUGHIN'...
"...LISTENIN' TO A CHROME-DOMED CREEP CALLED... EGGHEAD!"
FRAGI
FRAG
...AND THEREBY HAS HUNG MY TALE!
ARE YOU IN OR OUT OF MY LITTLE VENTURE, MR. BARTON?
OUT, LITTLE MAN!

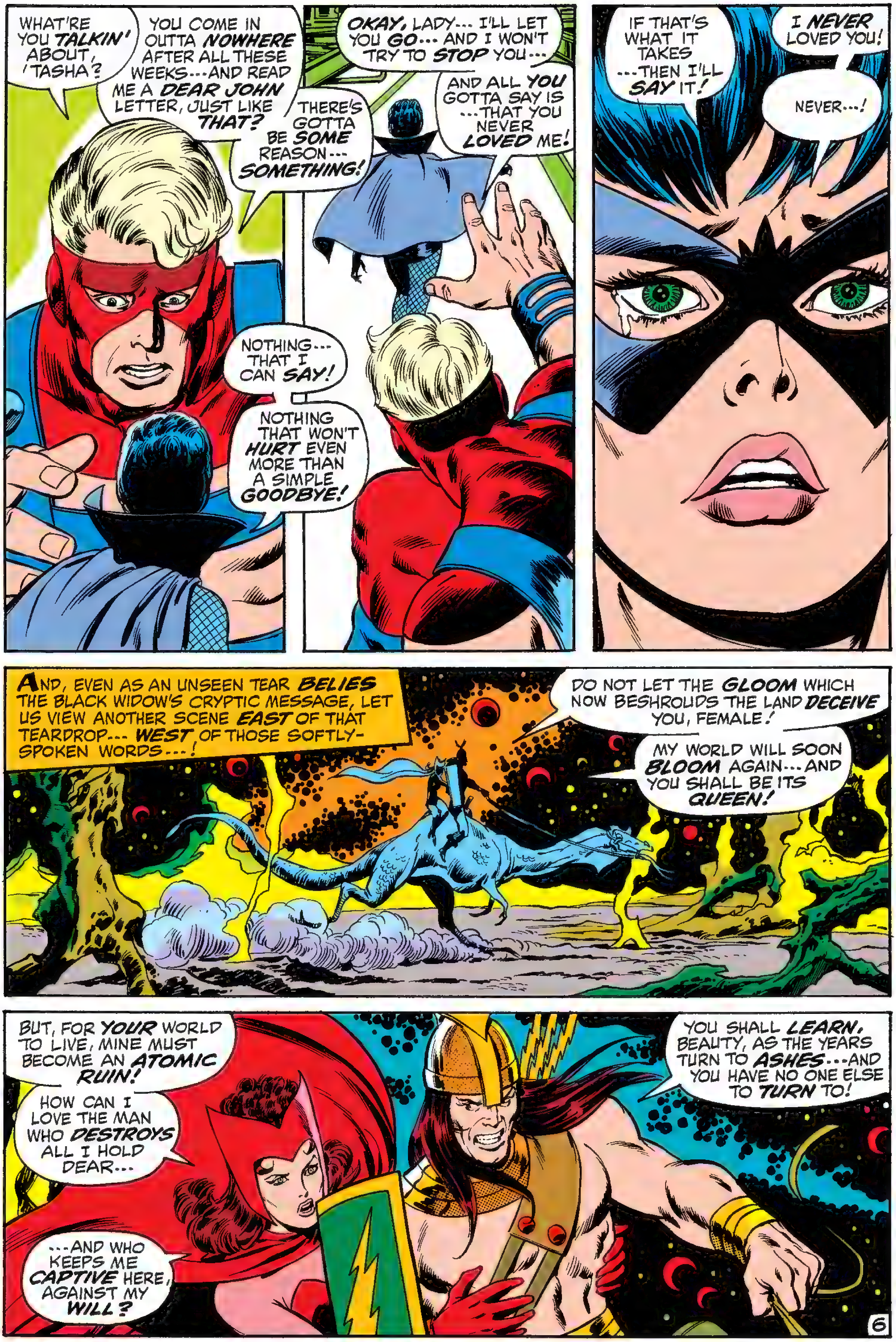

BUT, I STILL DON'T BUY YOUR TALL-TALE ABOUT A SPACE STATION...
LET ALONE THE IDEA OF PAYIN' YOU SO I CAN THUMB A RIDE!
NO DEAL!
PITY 'TIS, 'TIS TRUE!
ESPECIALLY SINCE I TOLD YOU THE COORDINATES OF MY PROJECTED SATELLITE!
DON'T LET THAT WORRY YOUR SHINY LITTLE HEAD!
NOBODY'D BELIEVE US... ANY MORE'N WE BELIEVE YOU!
C'MON, BOYS!
WE'RE WITH YOU, B.B.!
...GLAD TO GET OUTTA THERE!
THAT GUY'S A FULL-TIME NUT!
AREHOUSE
I DIDN'T BUILD UP THIS TOWN'S RACKETS THE PAST COUPLE'A YEARS...
JUST TO TURN THE PROCEEDS OVER TO A BALDIN', WOULD-BE HITLER!
CORRECTION, MR. BARNEY BARTON!
YOU WILL TURN NOTHING OVER TO ANYONE... EVER AGAIN!
WHAT IN...? SOME KIND'A ROBOT...
WITH EGGHEAD'S VOICE!!
GET 'IM, BOYS... QUICK!


"BUT, I MIGHT AS WELL'VE SENT TIN SOLDIERS AGAINST A TORNADO..!"
VERY WELL, YOU WHIMPERING WEAKLING...
NO... NO! STOP!!
I SHALL STOP!
BUT YOU SHALL NOT!!
AND NOW, MR. BARTON'S OTHER PROTECTOR...
I HOPE HE'S PAID YOU WELL... FOR YOUR LIFE!
BAH! THESE TWO ARE DEAD... BUT BARTON HIMSELF SOMEHOW FLED!
NO MATTER! HE'LL DARE NOT TELL ANYONE ELSE WHAT HE HAS SEEN...!
THAT'S A LEAD-PIPE CINCH!
I DON'T WANNA END UP ON A THIRD SLAB IN THE MORGUE!
I'M LAYIN' LOW... TILL I FIGURE OUT MY NEXT MOVE!


...AND THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING, EH?
NO WONDER THE CRIME SCENE'S BEEN SO QUIET LATELY!
SO WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT OF HIDING NOW, BARTON!
JUST PLAYIN' THE ODDS, SWEET THING!
WITH WHAT I KNOW, YOU DO-GOODERS MIGHT JUST FOUL UP EGG-HEAD'S LITTLE SCHEME!
AND IF YOU DO, I STAND TO BE THE BIGGEST HERO SINCE LINDBERGH, OR MAYBE...
...OR MAYBE DILLINGER, HUH, CRUMB?
YOUR STORY'S AS PHONY AS A THREE-DOLLAR BILL!
YOU JUST CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE ON THAT DEATH-RAY BLASTIN' YOUR MEAL TICKET OFF THE MAP!
CAN YOU, RAT?
A-AVENGERS!
MAKE HIM LET ME G-GO!!
BRAVE AS EVER, AIN'TCHA?
WHATEVER HIS MOTIVES, AVENGER...
IF HE TRULY KNOWS THE PRECISE LOCATION OF THAT MADMAN'S SPACE STATION...
YOU KNOW WE MUST ACCEPT HIS TERMS!
THE PANTHER'S RIGHT!
SO, SWALLOW YOUR REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST, BIG MAN...
AND LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!
HMMM... WE ALL KNOW HAWKEYE WAS ONCE A HUNTED MAN!
YET, WE ALWAYS ASSUMED HE WAS JUST MIS-UNDERSTOOD!
BUT, IF HE WAS HOOKED UP WITH A BIG-TIME HOOD LIKE BARNEY BARTON...
I WONDER...!


OKAY, OKAY... *MAJORITY RULES!*
I KNOW YOU'VE GOTTA REPORT TO *NICK FURY*, 'TASHA!
SO... *LATER*, HEAR?
AND... BE *CAREFUL*, MY IMPETUOUS DARLING!
LIKE A GUY JUGGLIN' *COBRAS*, DOLL!
BRIEF MINUTES LATER, BARNEY BARTON HAS DISCLOSED HIS *INFORMATION*... AND HIS *TERMS*... AND THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN TO...
BLAST OFF!
VROOOOOOOOOM


AN EXCELLENT HIT, HAWKEYE...THOUGH PROVING YOUR STRENGTH MORE THAN YOUR SKILL!
THAT VOICE FROM ABOVE ME! I'D KNOW IT ANYWHERE!
THE BLACK WIDOW!
YOU SEEM STARTLED TO SEE ME HERE IN AVENGERS MANSION!
DID YOU FORGET THE SPECIAL KEY WHICH YOU YOURSELF GAVE ME?
LADY, WHEN YOU TURN THOSE DEEP DARK PEEPERS ON ME--- I EVEN FORGET MY NAME!
WHICH AIN'T TOO SURPRISIN', CONSIDERIN' HOW MANY NAMES I'VE HAD!
BUT, WHY THE LONG FACE, NATASHA BABY?
ARE YOU JUST HERE BETWEEN CAPERS FOR SHIELD, OR WHAT?
I'M AFRAID--- IT'S SOMETHING FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN THAT, AVENGER!
I'VE COME TO SPEAK---THE MOST DIFFICULT WORDS I SHALL EVER UTTER!
AFTER TODAY--- WE MUST NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN!
5.

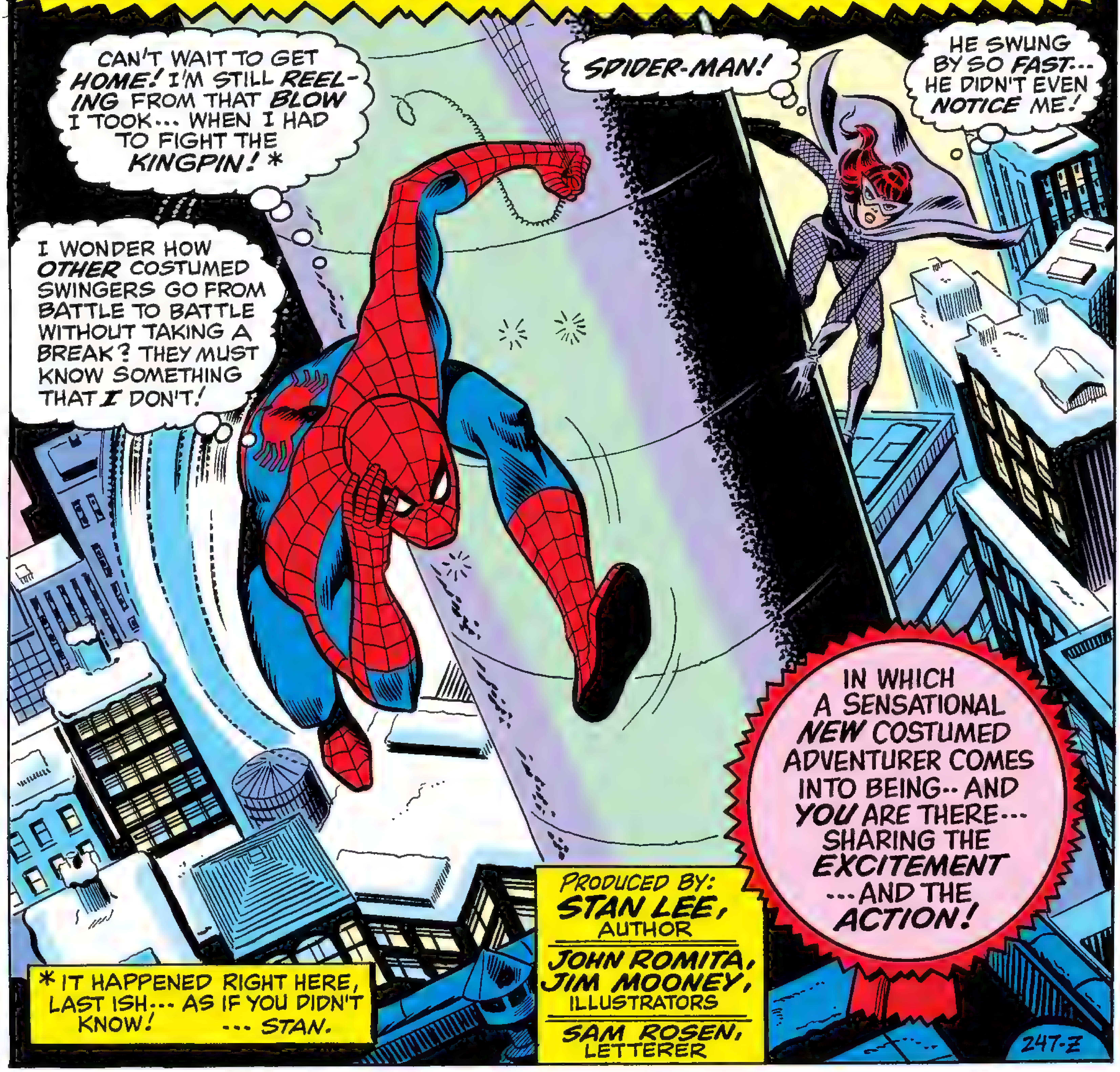

WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, 'TASHA?
YOU COME IN OUTTA NOWHERE AFTER ALL THESE WEEKS---AND READ ME A DEAR JOHN LETTER, JUST LIKE THAT?
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME REASON--- SOMETHING!
NOTHING--- THAT I CAN SAY!
NOTHING THAT WON'T HURT EVEN MORE THAN A SIMPLE GOODBYE!
OKAY, LADY--- I'LL LET YOU GO--- AND I WON'T TRY TO STOP YOU---
AND ALL YOU GOTTA SAY IS ---THAT YOU NEVER LOVED ME!
IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES ---THEN I'LL SAY IT!
I NEVER LOVED YOU!
NEVER---!
AND, EVEN AS AN UNSEEN TEAR BELIES THE BLACK WIDOW'S CRYPTIC MESSAGE, LET US VIEW ANOTHER SCENE EAST OF THAT TEARDROP--- WEST OF THOSE SOFTLY-SPOKEN WORDS---!
DO NOT LET THE GLOOM WHICH NOW BESHROUDS THE LAND DECEIVE YOU, FEMALE!
MY WORLD WILL SOON BLOOM AGAIN---AND YOU SHALL BE ITS QUEEN!
BUT, FOR YOUR WORLD TO LIVE, MINE MUST BECOME AN ATOMIC RUIN!
HOW CAN I LOVE THE MAN WHO DESTROYS ALL I HOLD DEAR---
---AND WHO KEEPS ME CAPTIVE HERE, AGAINST MY WILL?
YOU SHALL LEARN, BEAUTY, AS THE YEARS TURN TO ASHES---AND YOU HAVE NO ONE ELSE TO TURN TO!

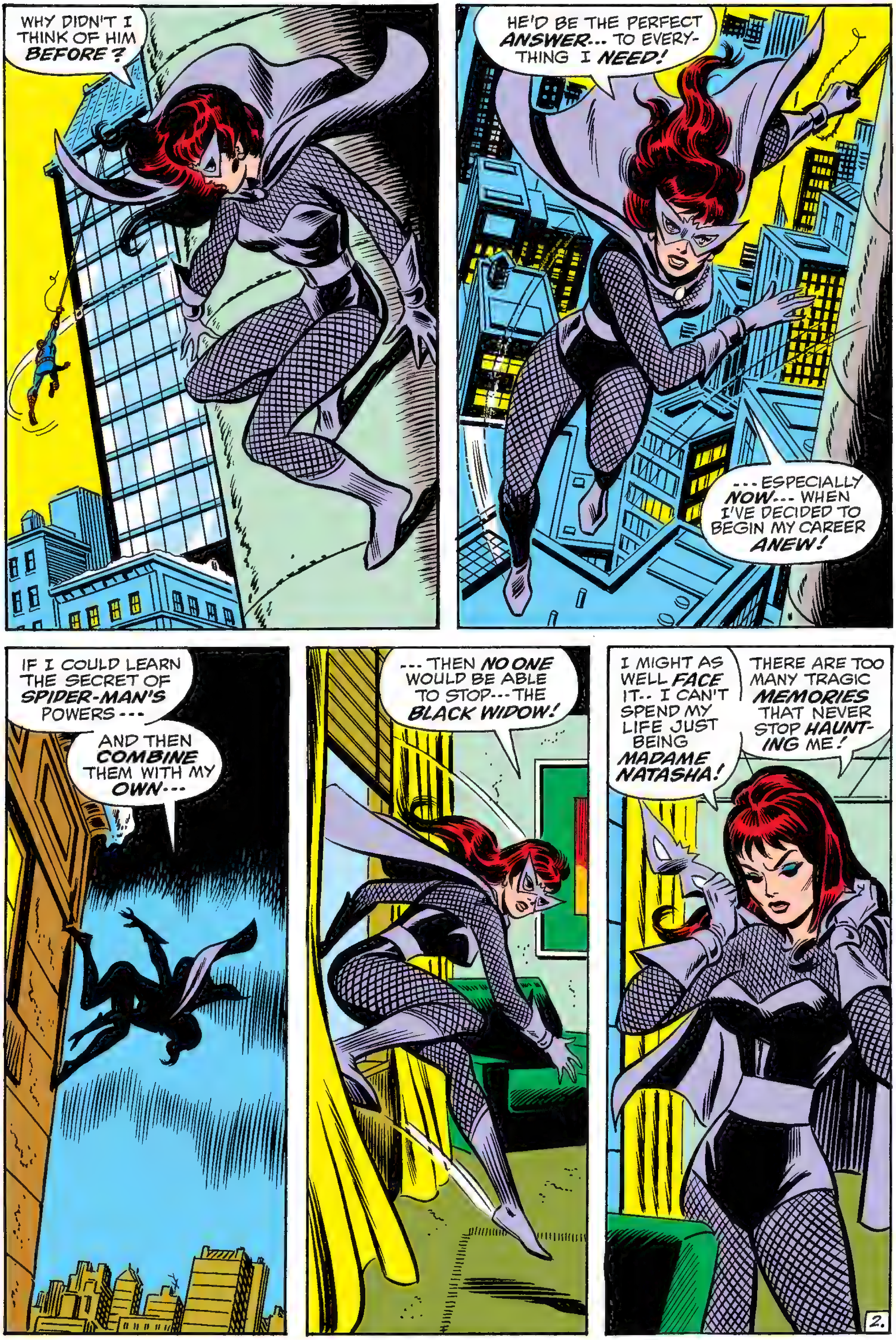
"

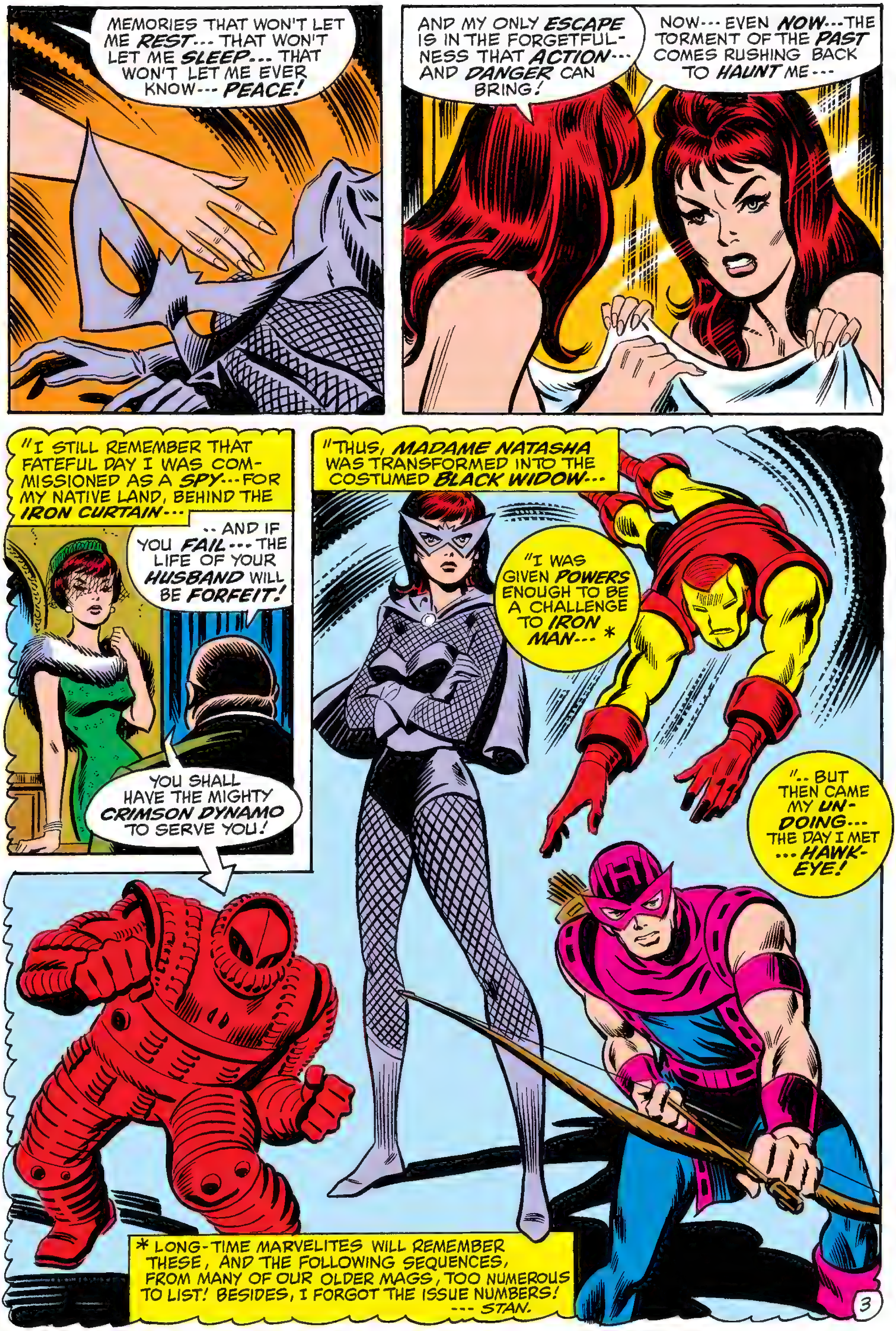
SPIDER-MAN
15¢
86
JULY
CC
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TM
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
--SHE'S A FEMALE COPY OF *MYSELF!*
HOW CAN I *FIGHT* HER?
ROMITA
PREPARE FOR SPIDEY'S STRANGEST BATTLE!
BEWARE THE BLACK WIDOW!

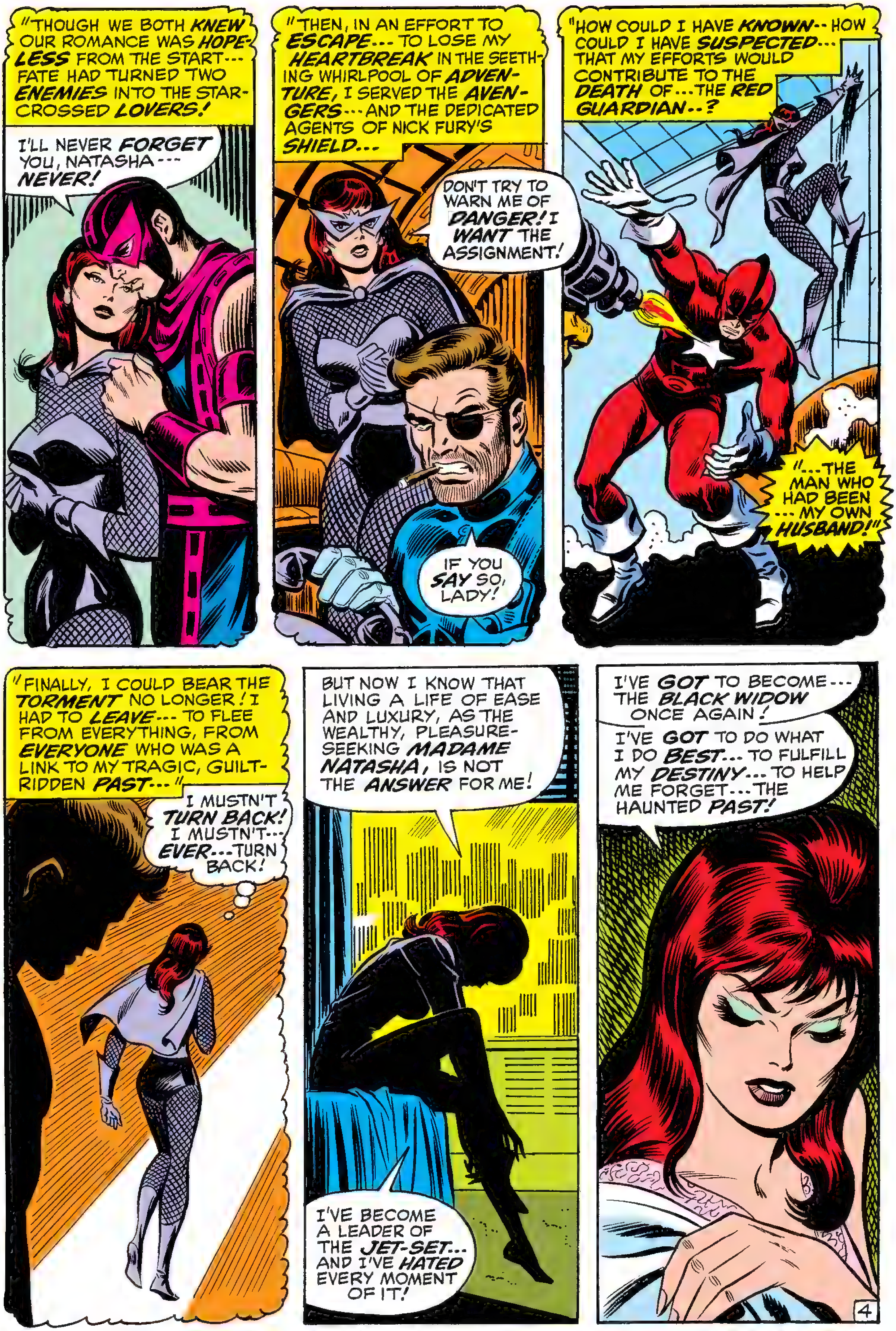
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!™

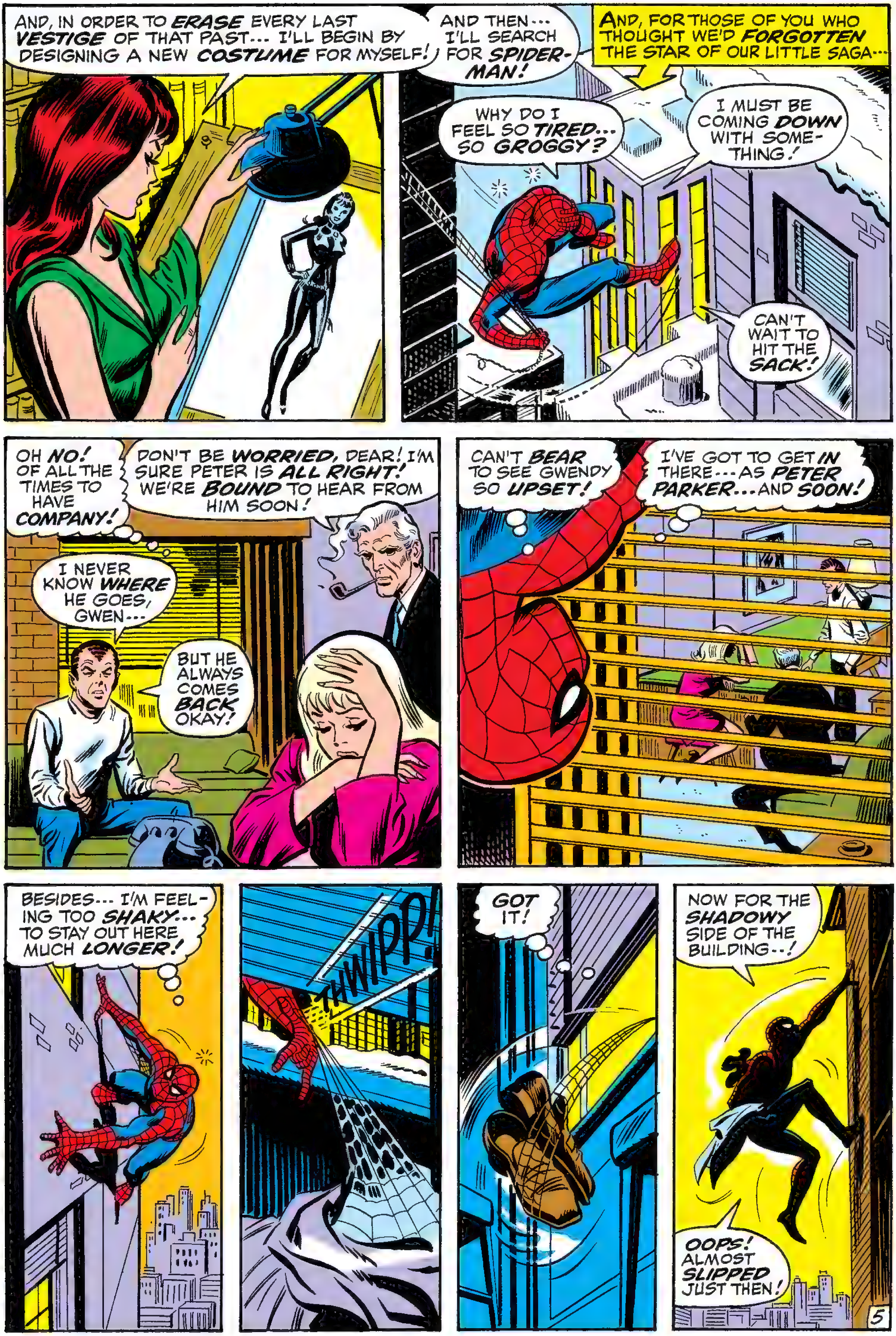
BEWARE... THE BLACK WIDOW!

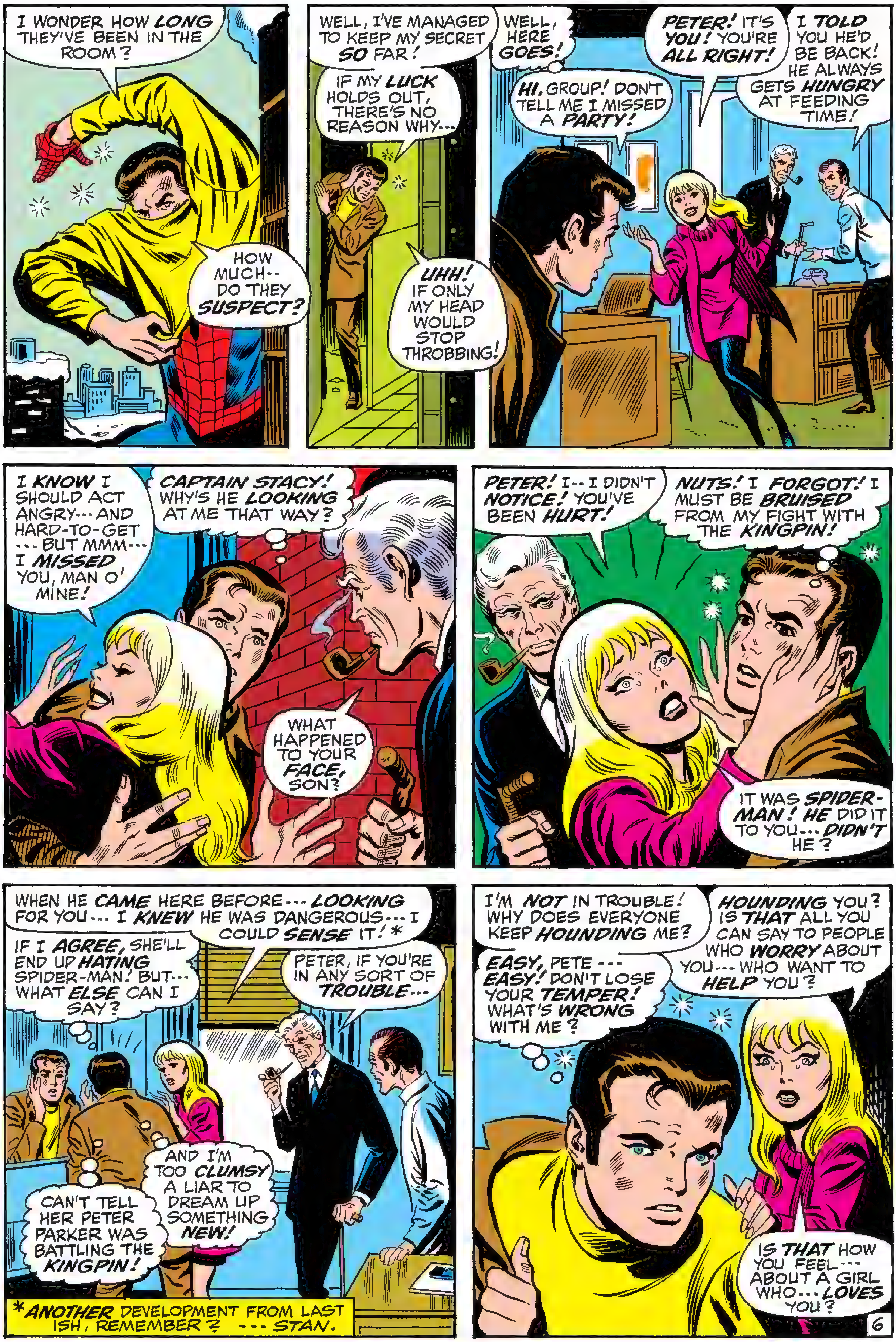

CAN'T WAIT TO GET *HOME!* I'M STILL *REELING* FROM THAT *BLOW* I TOOK... WHEN I HAD TO FIGHT THE *KINGPIN!* *
I WONDER HOW *OTHER* COSTUMED SWINGERS GO FROM BATTLE TO BATTLE WITHOUT TAKING A BREAK? THEY MUST KNOW SOMETHING THAT *I* DON'T!
SPIDER-MAN!
HE SWUNG BY SO *FAST*... HE DIDN'T EVEN *NOTICE* ME!
IN WHICH A SENSATIONAL *NEW* COSTUMED ADVENTURER COMES INTO BEING.. AND *YOU* ARE THERE... SHARING THE *EXCITEMENT* ...AND THE *ACTION!*
* IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE, LAST ISH... AS IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW! ... *STAN.*
PRODUCED BY: *STAN LEE,* AUTHOR
JOHN ROMITA, JIM MOONEY, ILLUSTRATORS
SAM ROSEN, LETTERER
247-Z

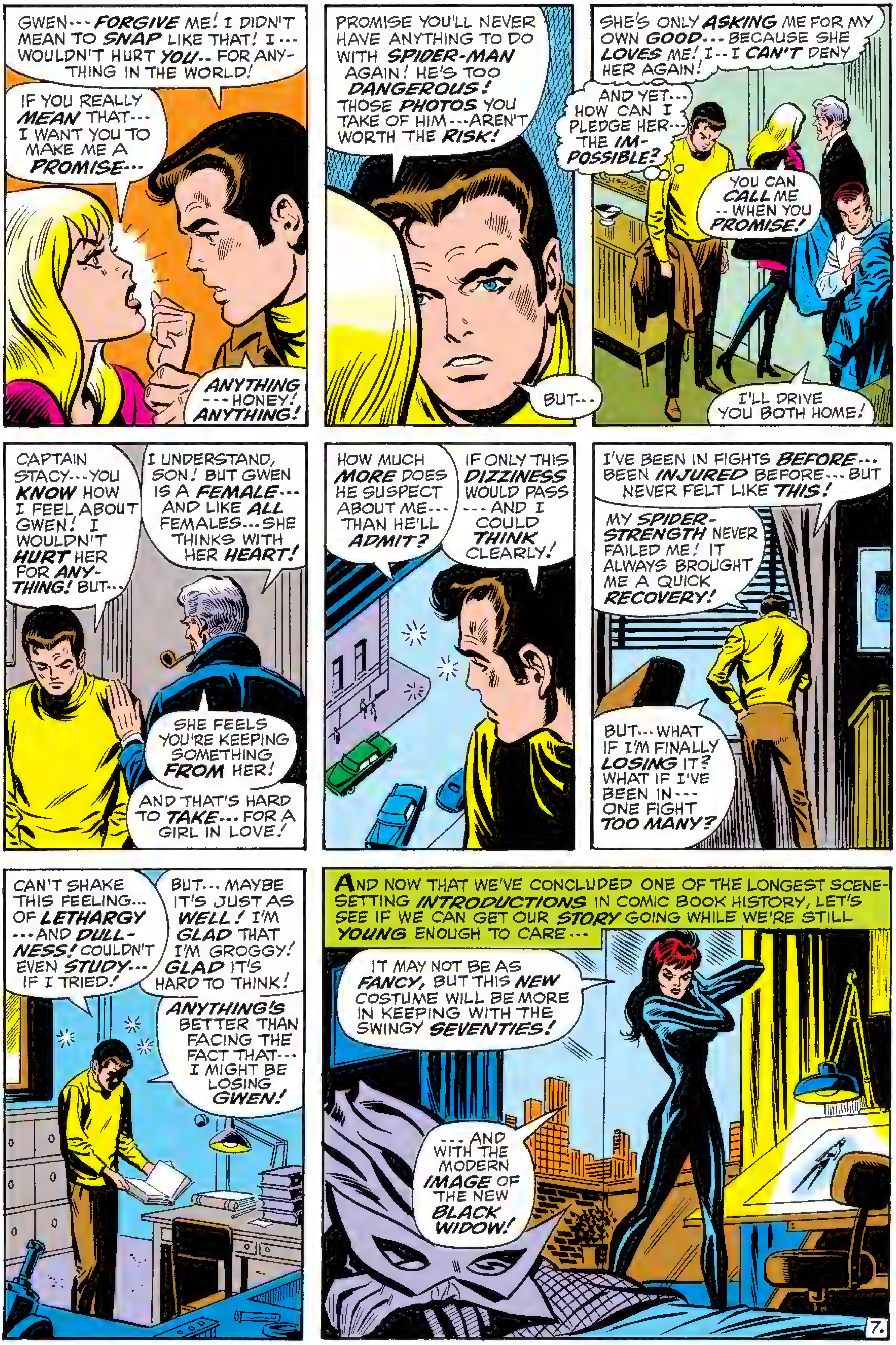

WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF HIM BEFORE?
HE'D BE THE PERFECT ANSWER... TO EVERYTHING I NEED!
...ESPECIALLY NOW... WHEN I'VE DECIDED TO BEGIN MY CAREER ANEW!
IF I COULD LEARN THE SECRET OF SPIDER-MAN'S POWERS---
AND THEN COMBINE THEM WITH MY OWN---
---THEN NO ONE WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP---THE BLACK WIDOW!
I MIGHT AS WELL FACE IT-- I CAN'T SPEND MY LIFE JUST BEING MADAME NATASHA!
THERE ARE TOO MANY TRAGIC MEMORIES THAT NEVER STOP HAUNTING ME!

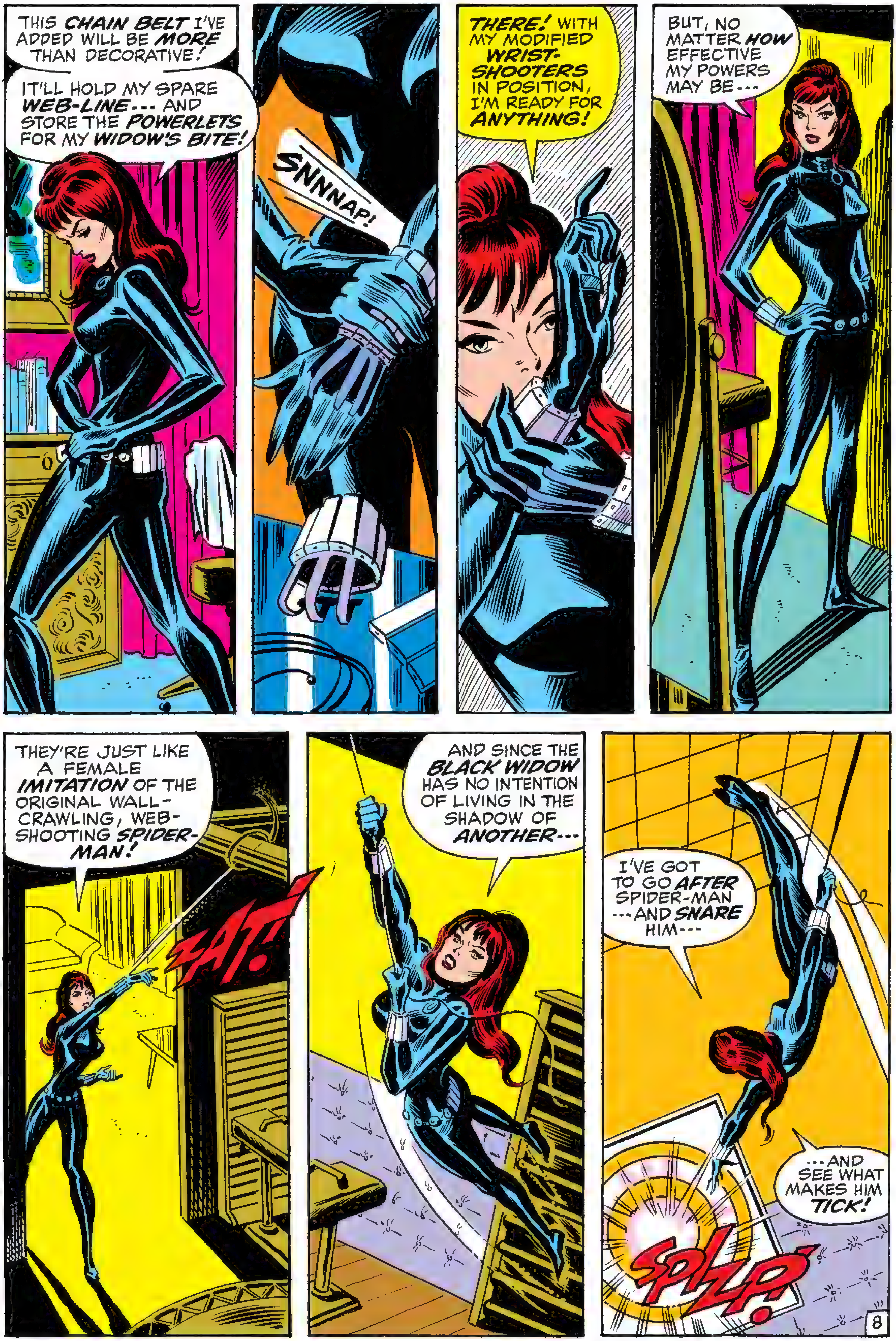

MEMORIES THAT WON'T LET ME *REST*--- THAT WON'T LET ME *SLEEP*--- THAT WON'T LET ME EVER KNOW--- *PEACE!*
AND MY ONLY *ESCAPE* IS IN THE FORGETFULNESS THAT *ACTION*--- AND *DANGER* CAN BRING!
NOW--- EVEN *NOW*---THE TORMENT OF THE *PAST* COMES RUSHING BACK TO *HAUNT* ME---
"I STILL REMEMBER THAT FATEFUL DAY I WAS COMMISSIONED AS A *SPY*---FOR MY NATIVE LAND, BEHIND THE *IRON CURTAIN*---
-- AND IF YOU *FAIL*--- THE LIFE OF YOUR *HUSBAND* WILL BE *FORFEIT!*
YOU SHALL HAVE THE MIGHTY *CRIMSON DYNAMO* TO SERVE YOU!
"THUS, *MADAME NATASHA* WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THE COSTUMED *BLACK WIDOW*---
"I WAS GIVEN *POWERS* ENOUGH TO BE A CHALLENGE TO *IRON MAN*--- *
".. BUT THEN CAME MY *UNDOING*... THE DAY I MET ... *HAWKEYE!*
* LONG-TIME MARVELITES WILL REMEMBER THESE, AND THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCES, FROM MANY OF OUR OLDER MAGS, TOO NUMEROUS TO LIST! BESIDES, I FORGOT THE ISSUE NUMBERS! --- STAN.

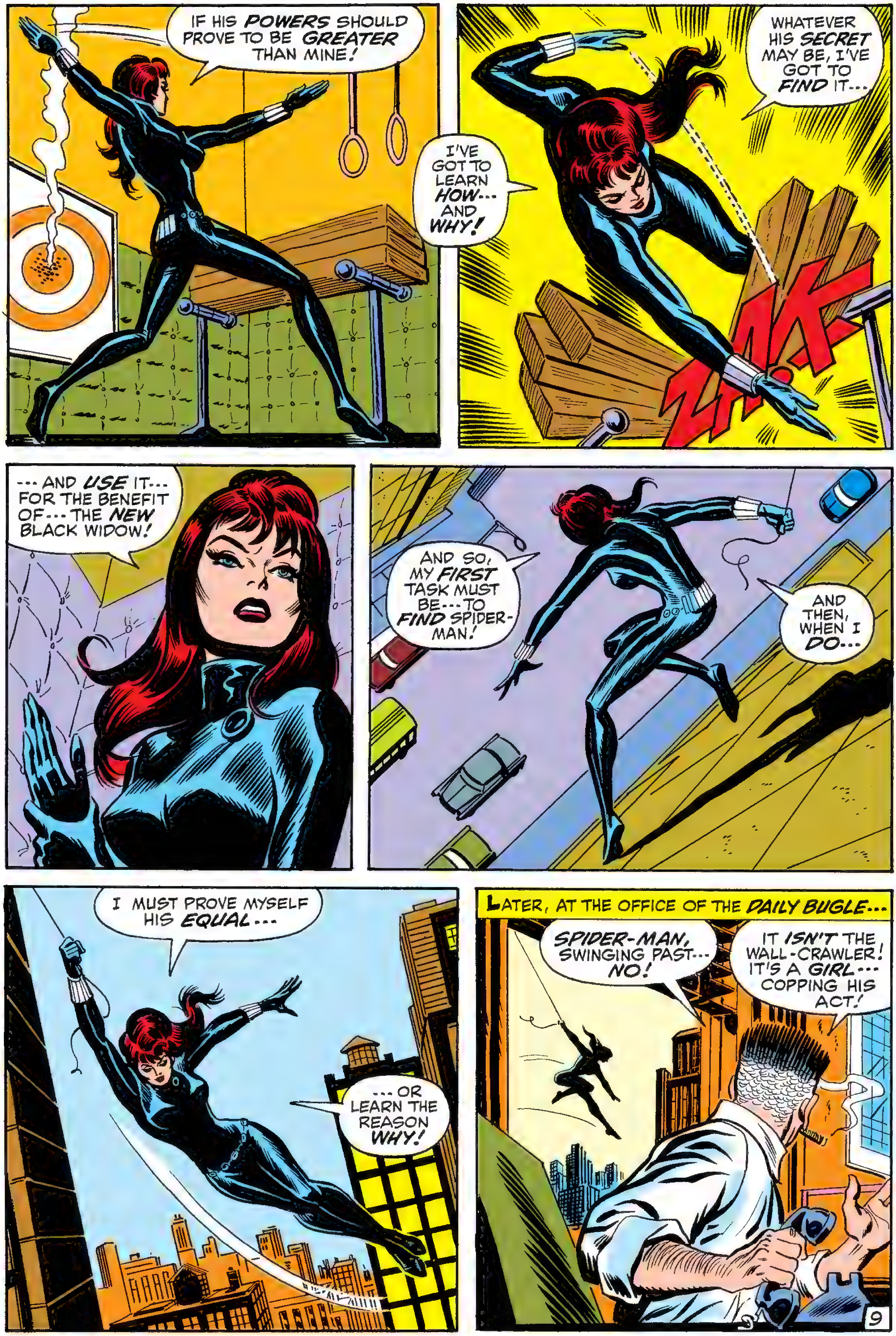

"THOUGH WE BOTH KNEW OUR ROMANCE WAS HOPELESS FROM THE START--- FATE HAD TURNED TWO ENEMIES INTO THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS!
I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU, NATASHA--- NEVER!
"THEN, IN AN EFFORT TO ESCAPE--- TO LOSE MY HEARTBREAK IN THE SEETHING WHIRLPOOL OF ADVENTURE, I SERVED THE AVENGERS--- AND THE DEDICATED AGENTS OF NICK FURY'S SHIELD...
DON'T TRY TO WARN ME OF DANGER! I WANT THE ASSIGNMENT!
IF YOU SAY SO, LADY!
"HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN-- HOW COULD I HAVE SUSPECTED--- THAT MY EFFORTS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEATH OF---THE RED GUARDIAN--?
"...THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN ... MY OWN HUSBAND!"
"FINALLY, I COULD BEAR THE TORMENT NO LONGER! I HAD TO LEAVE--- TO FLEE FROM EVERYTHING, FROM EVERYONE WHO WAS A LINK TO MY TRAGIC, GUILT-RIDDEN PAST---"
I MUSTN'T TURN BACK! I MUSTN'T--- EVER---TURN BACK!
BUT NOW I KNOW THAT LIVING A LIFE OF EASE AND LUXURY, AS THE WEALTHY, PLEASURE-SEEKING MADAME NATASHA, IS NOT THE ANSWER FOR ME!
I'VE BECOME A LEADER OF THE JET-SET... AND I'VE HATED EVERY MOMENT OF IT!
I'VE GOT TO BECOME--- THE BLACK WIDOW ONCE AGAIN!
I'VE GOT TO DO WHAT I DO BEST... TO FULFILL MY DESTINY... TO HELP ME FORGET---THE HAUNTED PAST!

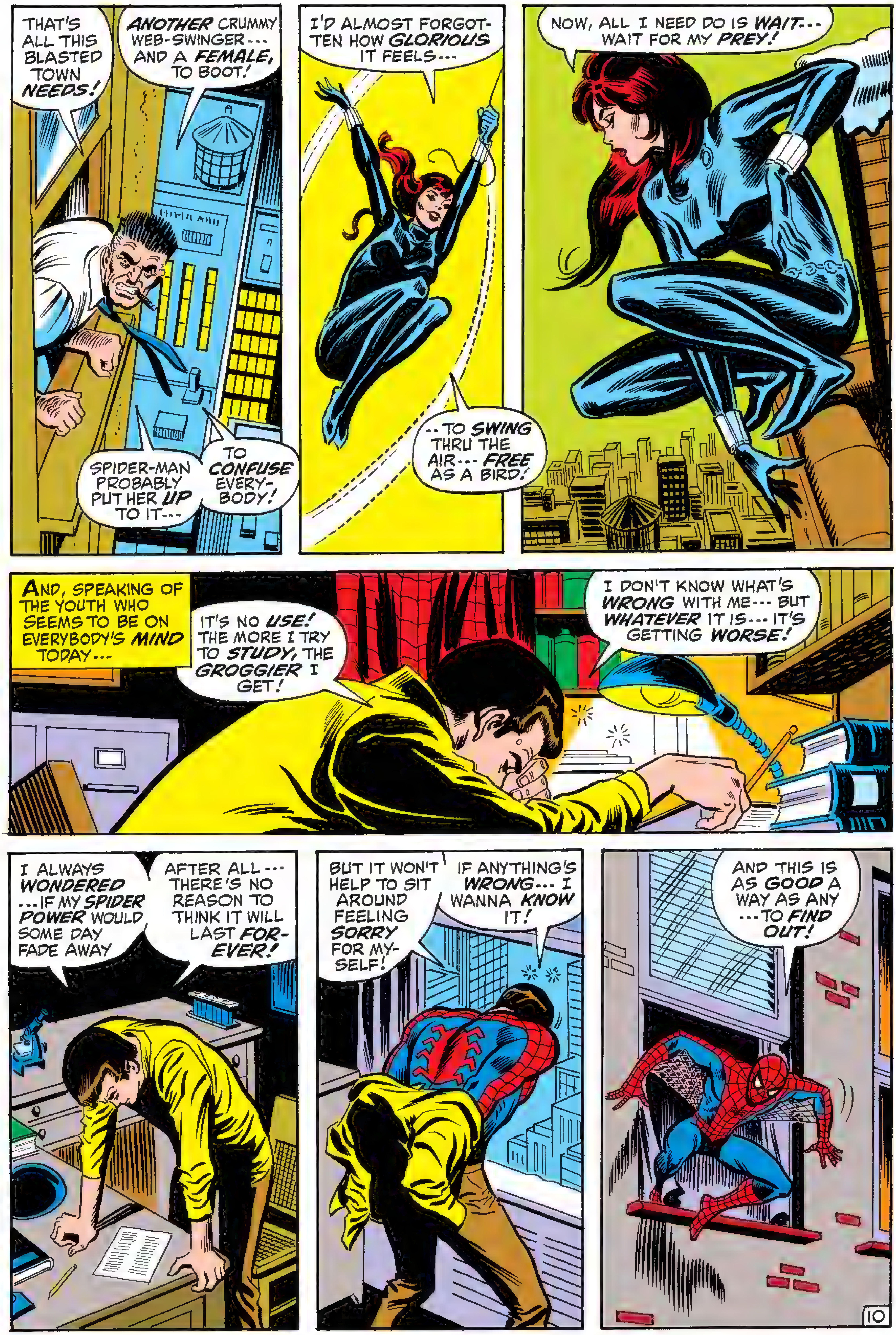

AND, IN ORDER TO **ERASE** EVERY LAST **VESTIGE** OF THAT PAST... I'LL BEGIN BY DESIGNING A NEW **COSTUME** FOR MYSELF!
AND THEN... I'LL SEARCH FOR **SPIDER-MAN!**
AND, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO THOUGHT WE'D **FORGOTTEN** THE STAR OF OUR LITTLE SAGA...
WHY DO I FEEL SO **TIRED**... SO **GROGGY?**
I MUST BE COMING **DOWN** WITH SOMETHING!
CAN'T WAIT TO HIT THE **SACK!**
OH **NO!** OF ALL THE TIMES TO HAVE **COMPANY!**
DON'T BE **WORRIED**, DEAR! I'M SURE PETER IS **ALL RIGHT!** WE'RE **BOUND** TO HEAR FROM HIM SOON!
I NEVER KNOW **WHERE** HE GOES, GWEN...
BUT HE ALWAYS COMES **BACK** OKAY!
CAN'T **BEAR** TO SEE GWENDY SO **UPSET!**
I'VE GOT TO GET **IN** THERE... AS **PETER PARKER**... AND **SOON!**
BESIDES... I'M FEELING TOO **SHAKY**... TO STAY OUT HERE MUCH **LONGER!**
THWIPP!
GOT IT!
NOW FOR THE **SHADOWY** SIDE OF THE BUILDING..!
OOPS! ALMOST **SLIPPED** JUST THEN!

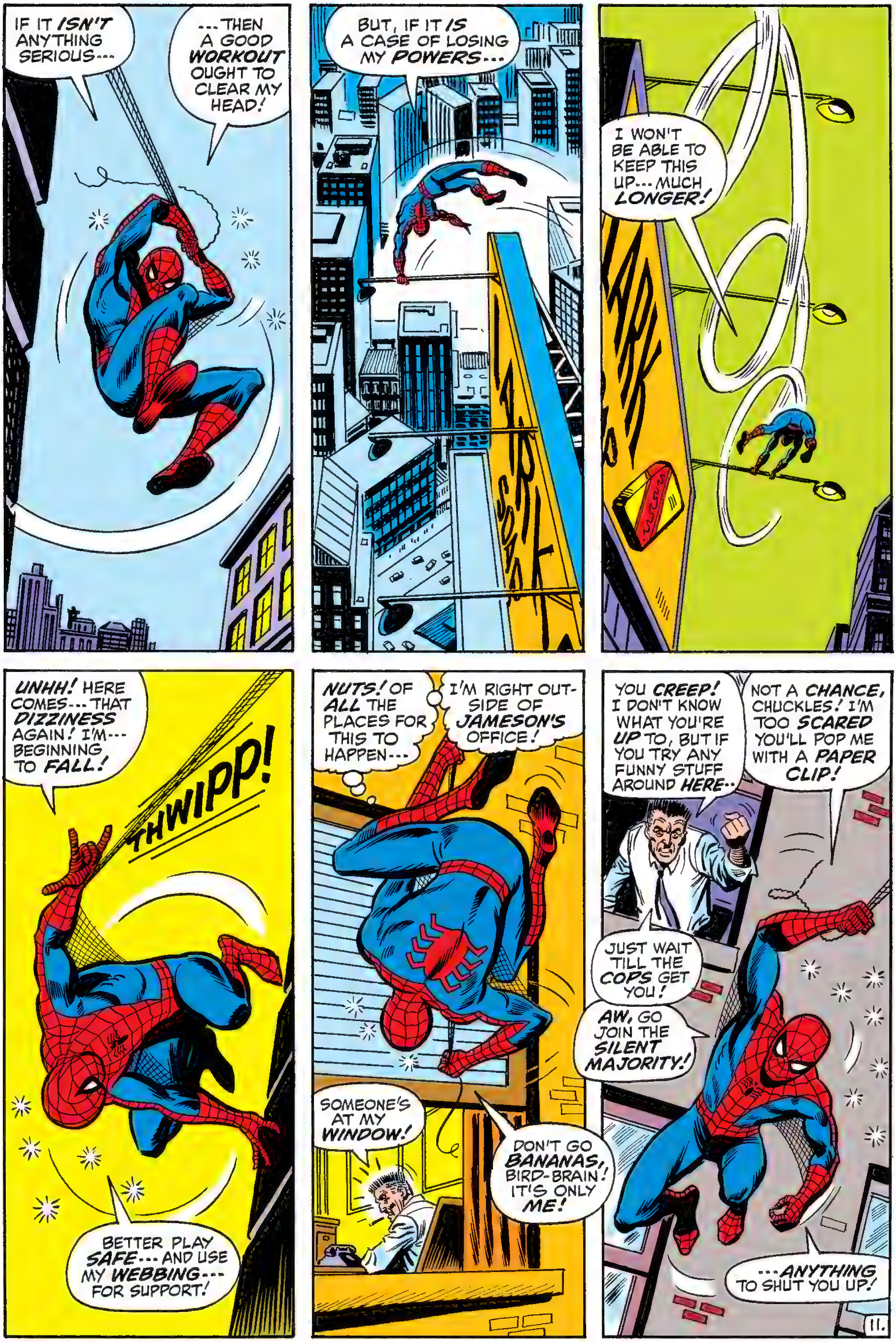

I WONDER HOW **LONG** THEY'VE BEEN IN THE ROOM?
HOW MUCH-- DO THEY **SUSPECT?**
WELL, I'VE MANAGED TO KEEP MY SECRET **SO** FAR!
IF MY **LUCK** HOLDS OUT, THERE'S NO REASON WHY...
UHH! IF ONLY MY HEAD WOULD STOP THROBBING!
WELL, HERE **GOES!**
HI, GROUP! DON'T TELL ME I MISSED A **PARTY!**
PETER! IT'S **YOU!** YOU'RE **ALL RIGHT!**
I **TOLD** YOU HE'D BE BACK! HE ALWAYS GETS **HUNGRY** AT FEEDING TIME!
I **KNOW** I SHOULD ACT ANGRY--- AND HARD-TO-GET --- BUT MMM--- I **MISSED** YOU, MAN O' MINE!
CAPTAIN STACY! WHY'S HE **LOOKING** AT ME THAT WAY?
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR **FACE,** SON?
PETER! I-- I DIDN'T **NOTICE!** YOU'VE BEEN **HURT!**
NUTS! I **FORGOT!** I MUST BE **BRUISED** FROM MY FIGHT WITH THE **KINGPIN!**
IT WAS **SPIDER-MAN! HE** DID IT TO YOU--- **DIDN'T** HE?
WHEN HE **CAME** HERE BEFORE--- **LOOKING** FOR YOU--- I **KNEW** HE WAS DANGEROUS--- I COULD **SENSE** IT! *
IF I **AGREE,** SHE'LL END UP **HATING** SPIDER-MAN! BUT--- WHAT **ELSE** CAN I SAY?
PETER, IF YOU'RE IN ANY SORT OF **TROUBLE---**
CAN'T TELL HER PETER PARKER WAS BATTLING THE **KINGPIN!**
AND I'M TOO **CLUMSY** A LIAR TO DREAM UP SOMETHING **NEW!**
***ANOTHER** DEVELOPMENT FROM LAST ISH, REMEMBER? --- **STAN.**
I'M **NOT** IN TROUBLE! WHY DOES EVERYONE KEEP **HOUNDING** ME?
HOUNDING YOU? IS **THAT** ALL YOU CAN SAY TO PEOPLE WHO **WORRY** ABOUT YOU--- WHO WANT TO **HELP** YOU?
EASY, PETE--- **EASY!** DON'T LOSE YOUR **TEMPER!** WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH ME?
IS **THAT** HOW YOU FEEL--- ABOUT A GIRL WHO--- **LOVES** YOU?

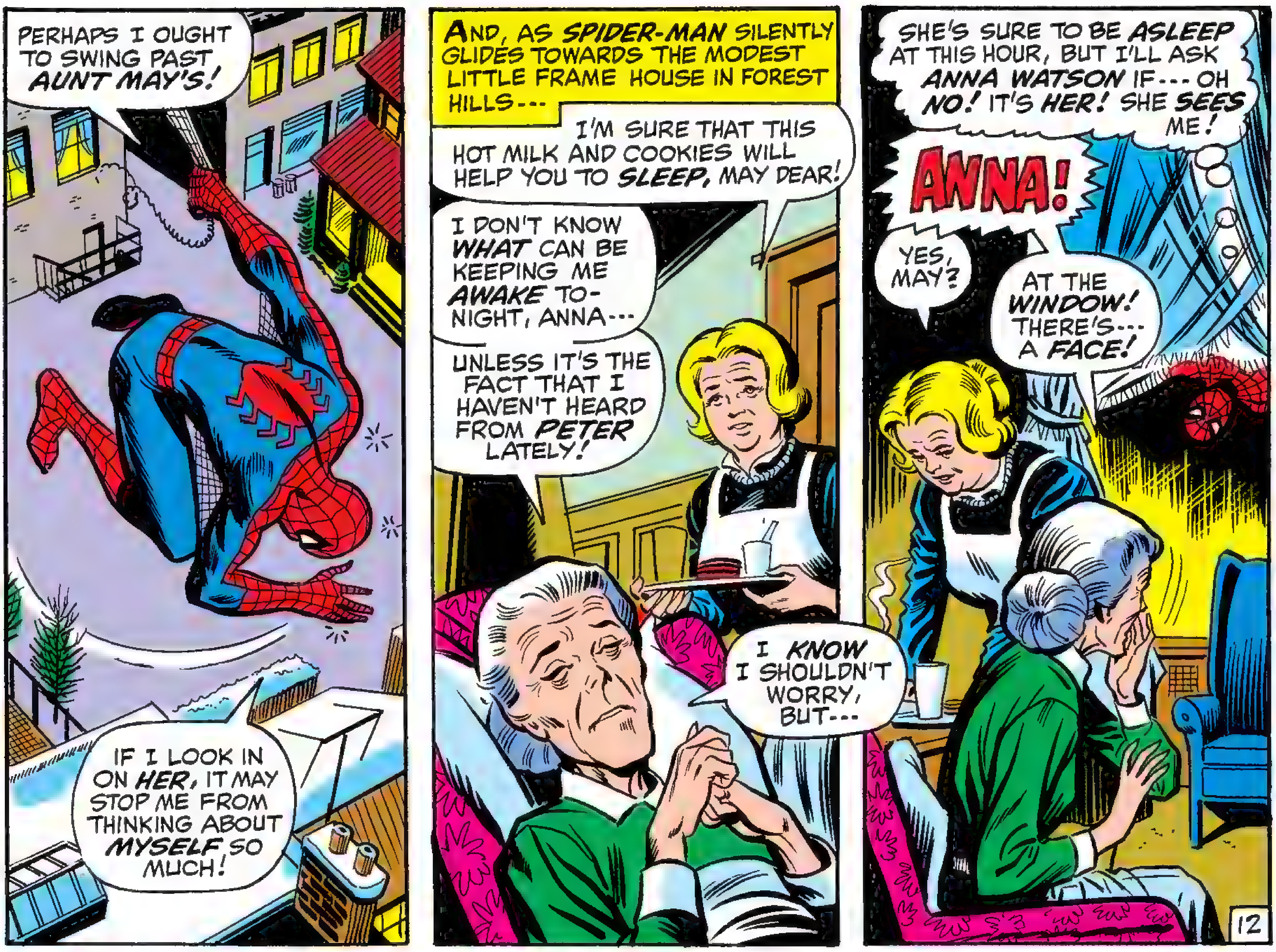

GWEN--- FORGIVE ME! I DIDN'T MEAN TO SNAP LIKE THAT! I--- WOULDN'T HURT YOU.. FOR ANYTHING IN THE WORLD!
IF YOU REALLY MEAN THAT--- I WANT YOU TO MAKE ME A PROMISE---
ANYTHING ---HONEY! ANYTHING!
PROMISE YOU'LL NEVER HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SPIDER-MAN AGAIN! HE'S TOO DANGEROUS! THOSE PHOTOS YOU TAKE OF HIM---AREN'T WORTH THE RISK!
BUT---
SHE'S ONLY ASKING ME FOR MY OWN GOOD--- BECAUSE SHE LOVES ME! I--I CAN'T DENY HER AGAIN!
AND YET--- HOW CAN I PLEDGE HER--- THE IMPOSSIBLE?
YOU CAN CALL ME --WHEN YOU PROMISE!
I'LL DRIVE YOU BOTH HOME!
CAPTAIN STACY---YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT GWEN! I WOULDN'T HURT HER FOR ANYTHING! BUT---
I UNDERSTAND, SON! BUT GWEN IS A FEMALE--- AND LIKE ALL FEMALES---SHE THINKS WITH HER HEART!
SHE FEELS YOU'RE KEEPING SOMETHING FROM HER!
AND THAT'S HARD TO TAKE--- FOR A GIRL IN LOVE!
HOW MUCH MORE DOES HE SUSPECT ABOUT ME--- THAN HE'LL ADMIT?
IF ONLY THIS DIZZINESS WOULD PASS ---AND I COULD THINK CLEARLY!
I'VE BEEN IN FIGHTS BEFORE--- BEEN INJURED BEFORE--- BUT NEVER FELT LIKE THIS!
MY SPIDER-STRENGTH NEVER FAILED ME! IT ALWAYS BROUGHT ME A QUICK RECOVERY!
BUT---WHAT IF I'M FINALLY LOSING IT? WHAT IF I'VE BEEN IN--- ONE FIGHT TOO MANY?
CAN'T SHAKE THIS FEELING... OF LETHARGY ---AND DULLNESS! COULDN'T EVEN STUDY--- IF I TRIED!
BUT--- MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL! I'M GLAD THAT I'M GROGGY! GLAD IT'S HARD TO THINK!
ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN FACING THE FACT THAT--- I MIGHT BE LOSING GWEN!
AND NOW THAT WE'VE CONCLUDED ONE OF THE LONGEST SCENE-SETTING INTRODUCTIONS IN COMIC BOOK HISTORY, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET OUR STORY GOING WHILE WE'RE STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO CARE---
IT MAY NOT BE AS FANCY, BUT THIS NEW COSTUME WILL BE MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE SWINGY SEVENTIES!
--- AND WITH THE MODERN IMAGE OF THE NEW BLACK WIDOW!

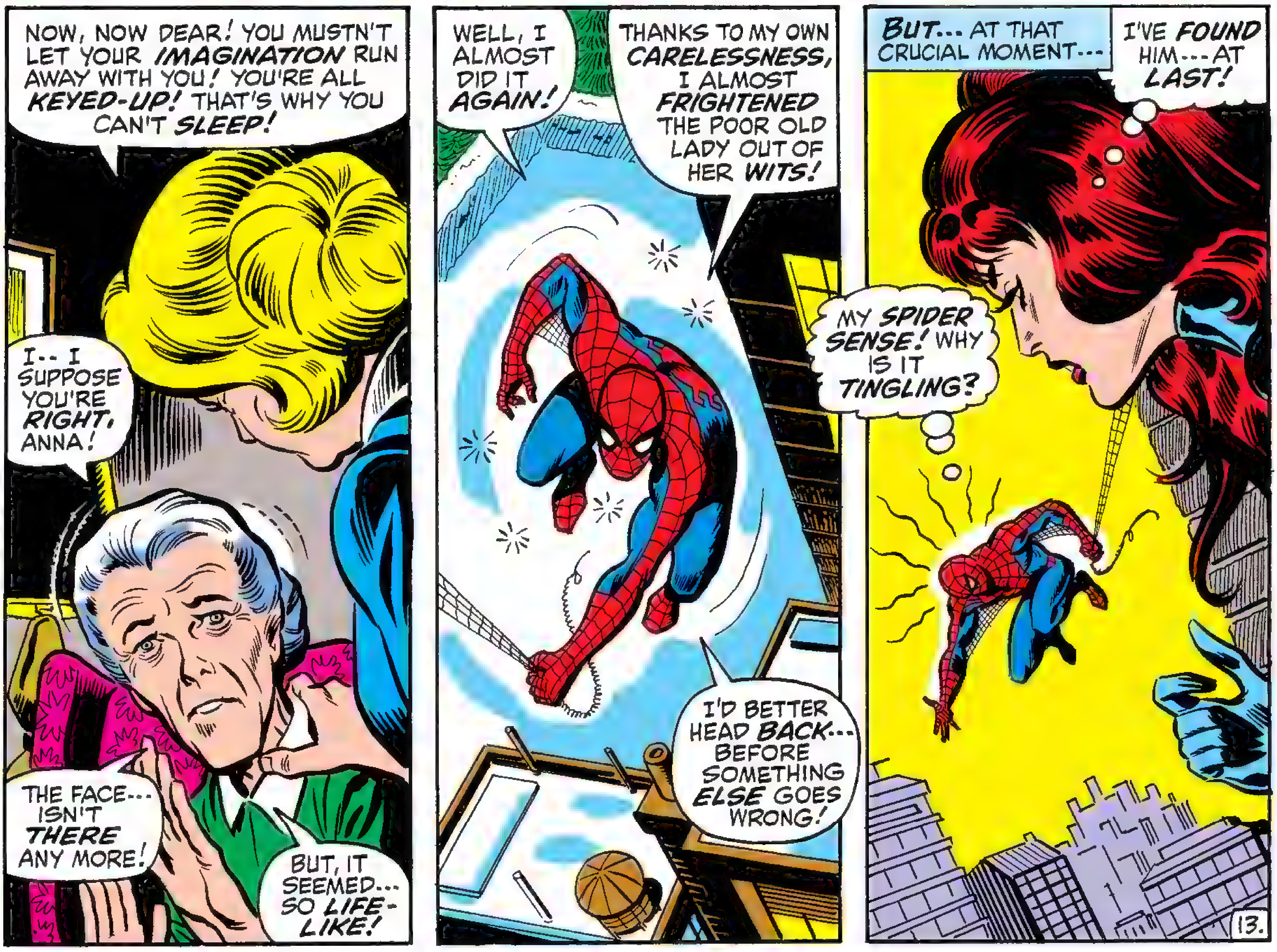

THIS *CHAIN BELT* I'VE ADDED WILL BE *MORE* THAN DECORATIVE!
IT'LL HOLD MY SPARE *WEB-LINE*... AND STORE THE *POWERLETS* FOR MY *WIDOW'S BITE!*
SNNNAP!
THERE! WITH MY MODIFIED *WRIST-SHOOTERS* IN POSITION, I'M READY FOR *ANYTHING!*
BUT, NO MATTER *HOW* EFFECTIVE MY POWERS MAY BE...
THEY'RE JUST LIKE A FEMALE *IMITATION* OF THE ORIGINAL WALL-CRAWLING, WEB-SHOOTING *SPIDER-MAN!*
ZAT!
AND SINCE THE *BLACK WIDOW* HAS NO INTENTION OF LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF *ANOTHER*...
I'VE GOT TO GO *AFTER* SPIDER-MAN ...AND *SNARE* HIM...
...AND SEE WHAT MAKES HIM *TICK!*
SPLZP!

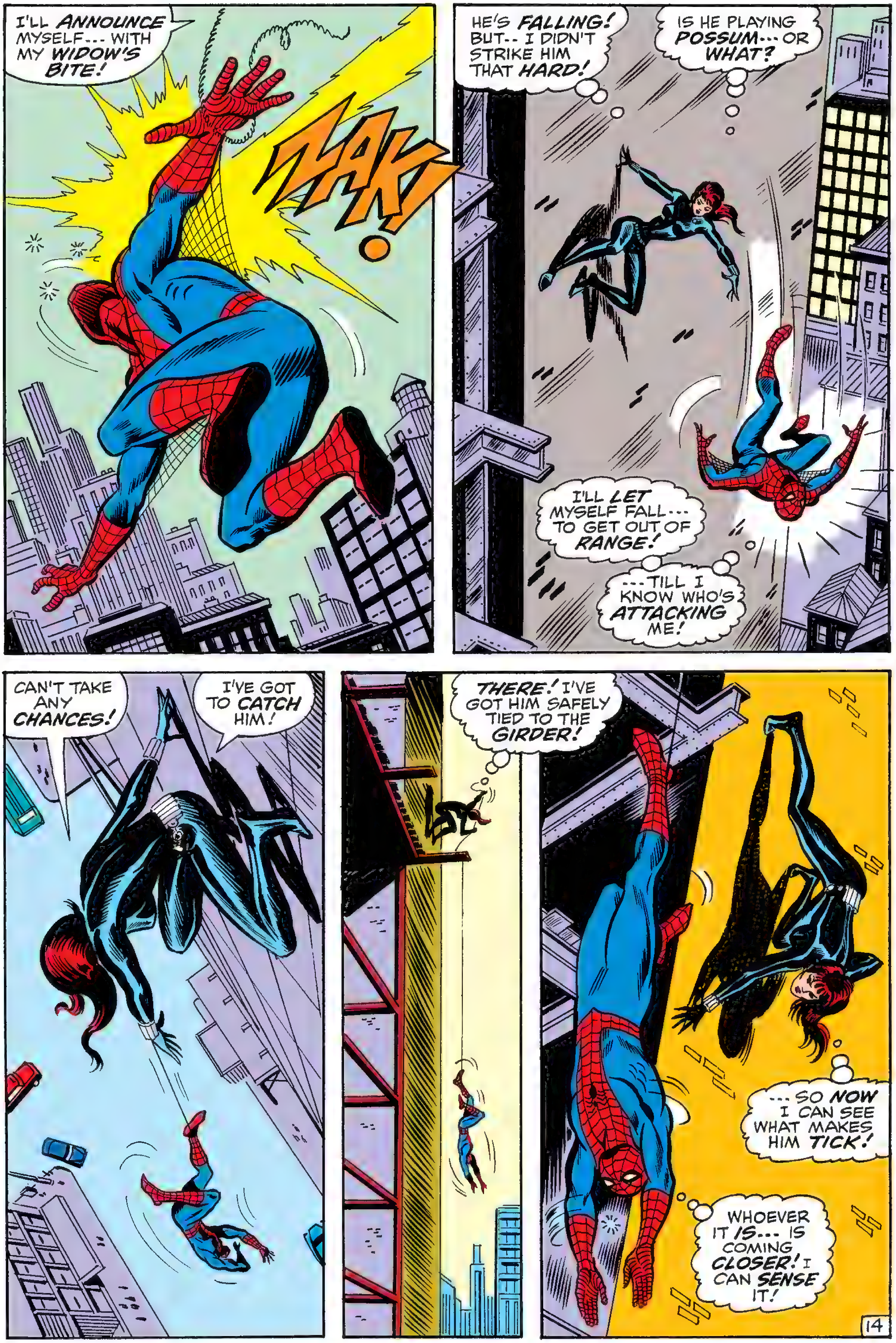

IF HIS *POWERS* SHOULD PROVE TO BE *GREATER* THAN MINE!
I'VE GOT TO LEARN *HOW*... AND *WHY!*
WHATEVER HIS *SECRET* MAY BE, I'VE GOT TO *FIND* IT...
ZAK
...AND *USE* IT... FOR THE BENEFIT OF... THE *NEW* BLACK WIDOW!
AND SO, MY *FIRST* TASK MUST BE... TO *FIND* SPIDER-MAN!
AND THEN, WHEN I *DO*...
I MUST PROVE MYSELF HIS *EQUAL*...
...OR LEARN THE REASON *WHY!*
LATER, AT THE OFFICE OF THE *DAILY BUGLE*...
SPIDER-MAN, SWINGING PAST... *NO!*
IT *ISN'T* THE WALL-CRAWLER! IT'S A *GIRL*... COPPING HIS ACT!

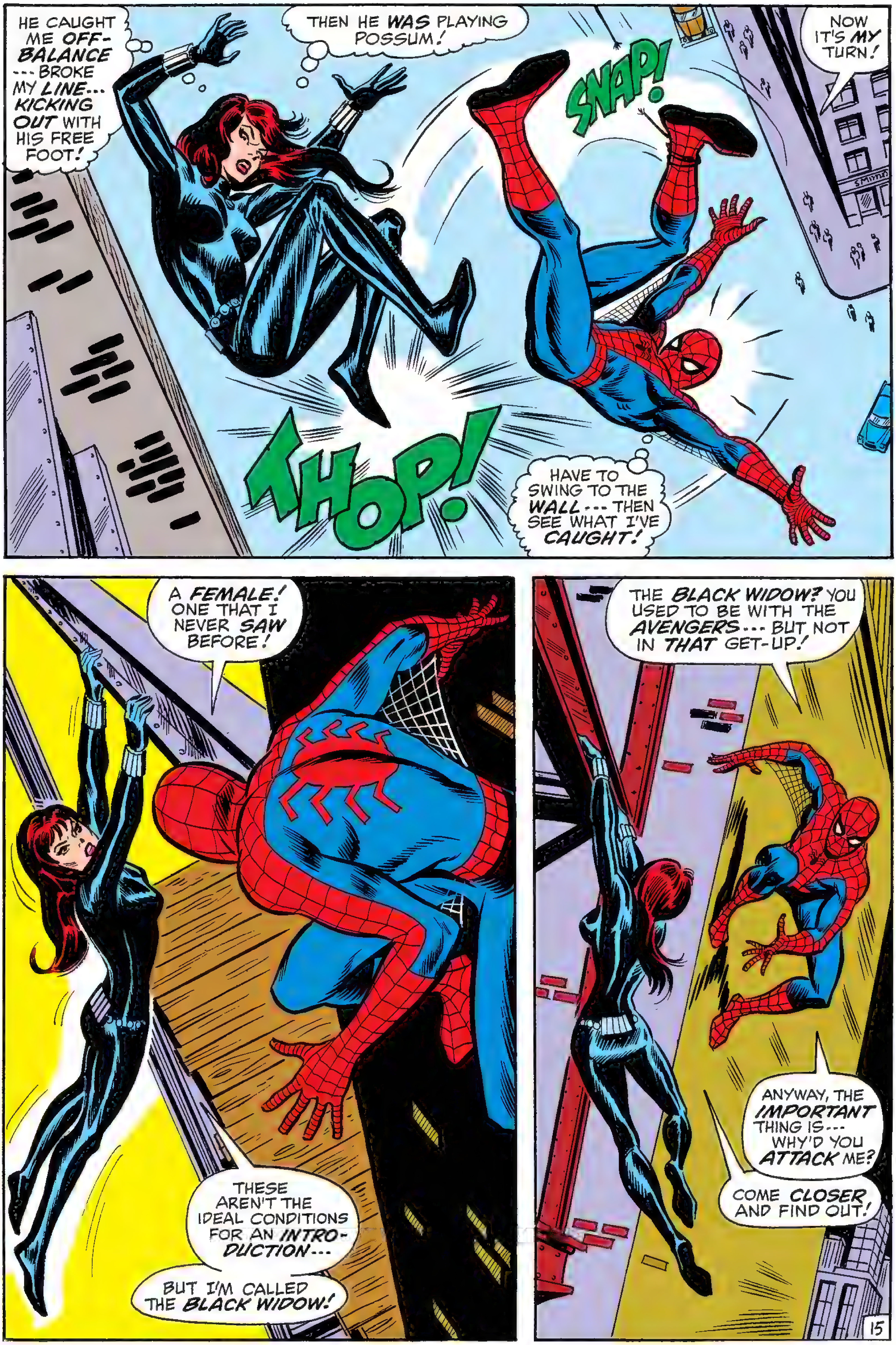

THAT'S ALL THIS BLASTED TOWN NEEDS!
ANOTHER CRUMMY WEB-SWINGER--- AND A FEMALE, TO BOOT!
SPIDER-MAN PROBABLY PUT HER UP TO IT---
TO CONFUSE EVERY-BODY!
I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN HOW GLORIOUS IT FEELS---
--TO SWING THRU THE AIR--- FREE AS A BIRD!
NOW, ALL I NEED DO IS WAIT--- WAIT FOR MY PREY!
AND, SPEAKING OF THE YOUTH WHO SEEMS TO BE ON EVERYBODY'S MIND TODAY---
IT'S NO USE! THE MORE I TRY TO STUDY, THE GROGGIER I GET!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME--- BUT WHATEVER IT IS--- IT'S GETTING WORSE!
I ALWAYS WONDERED ---IF MY SPIDER POWER WOULD SOME DAY FADE AWAY
AFTER ALL--- THERE'S NO REASON TO THINK IT WILL LAST FOREVER!
BUT IT WON'T HELP TO SIT AROUND FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF!
IF ANYTHING'S WRONG--- I WANNA KNOW IT!
AND THIS IS AS GOOD A WAY AS ANY ---TO FIND OUT!

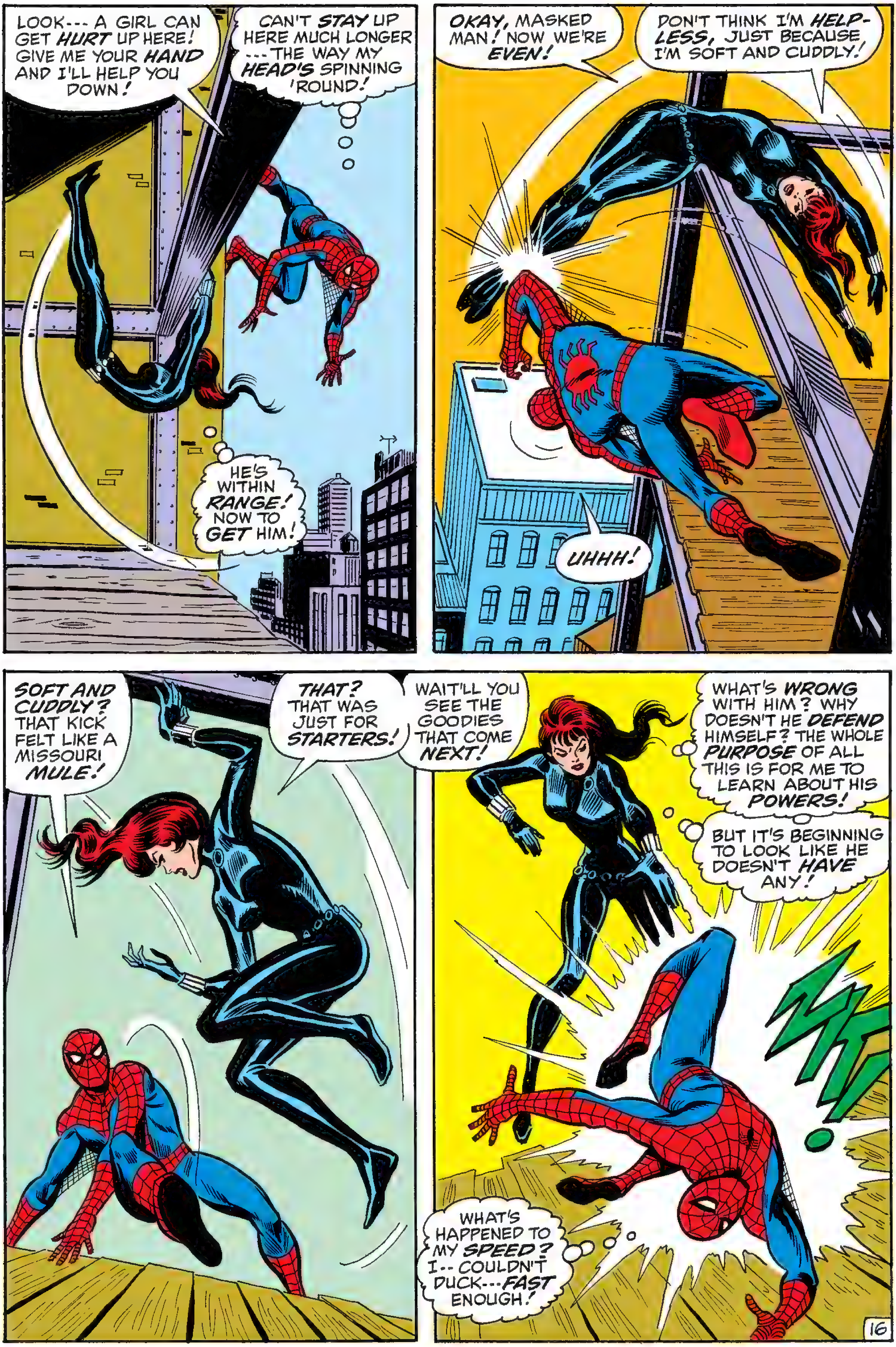

IF IT *ISN'T* ANYTHING SERIOUS---
---THEN A GOOD *WORKOUT* OUGHT TO CLEAR MY HEAD!
BUT, IF IT *IS* A CASE OF LOSING MY *POWERS*---
I WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP THIS UP--- MUCH *LONGER!*
UNHH! HERE COMES--- THAT *DIZZINESS* AGAIN! I'M--- BEGINNING TO *FALL!*
THWIPP!
BETTER PLAY *SAFE*--- AND USE MY *WEBBING*--- FOR SUPPORT!
NUTS! OF *ALL* THE PLACES FOR THIS TO HAPPEN---
I'M RIGHT OUTSIDE OF *JAMESON'S* OFFICE!
SOMEONE'S AT MY *WINDOW!*
DON'T GO *BANANAS,* BIRD-BRAIN! IT'S ONLY *ME!*
YOU *CREEP!* I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *UP* TO, BUT IF YOU TRY ANY FUNNY STUFF AROUND *HERE*--
NOT A *CHANCE,* CHUCKLES! I'M TOO *SCARED* YOU'LL POP ME WITH A *PAPER CLIP!*
JUST WAIT TILL THE *COPS* GET YOU!
AW, GO JOIN THE *SILENT MAJORITY!*
---*ANYTHING* TO SHUT YOU UP!

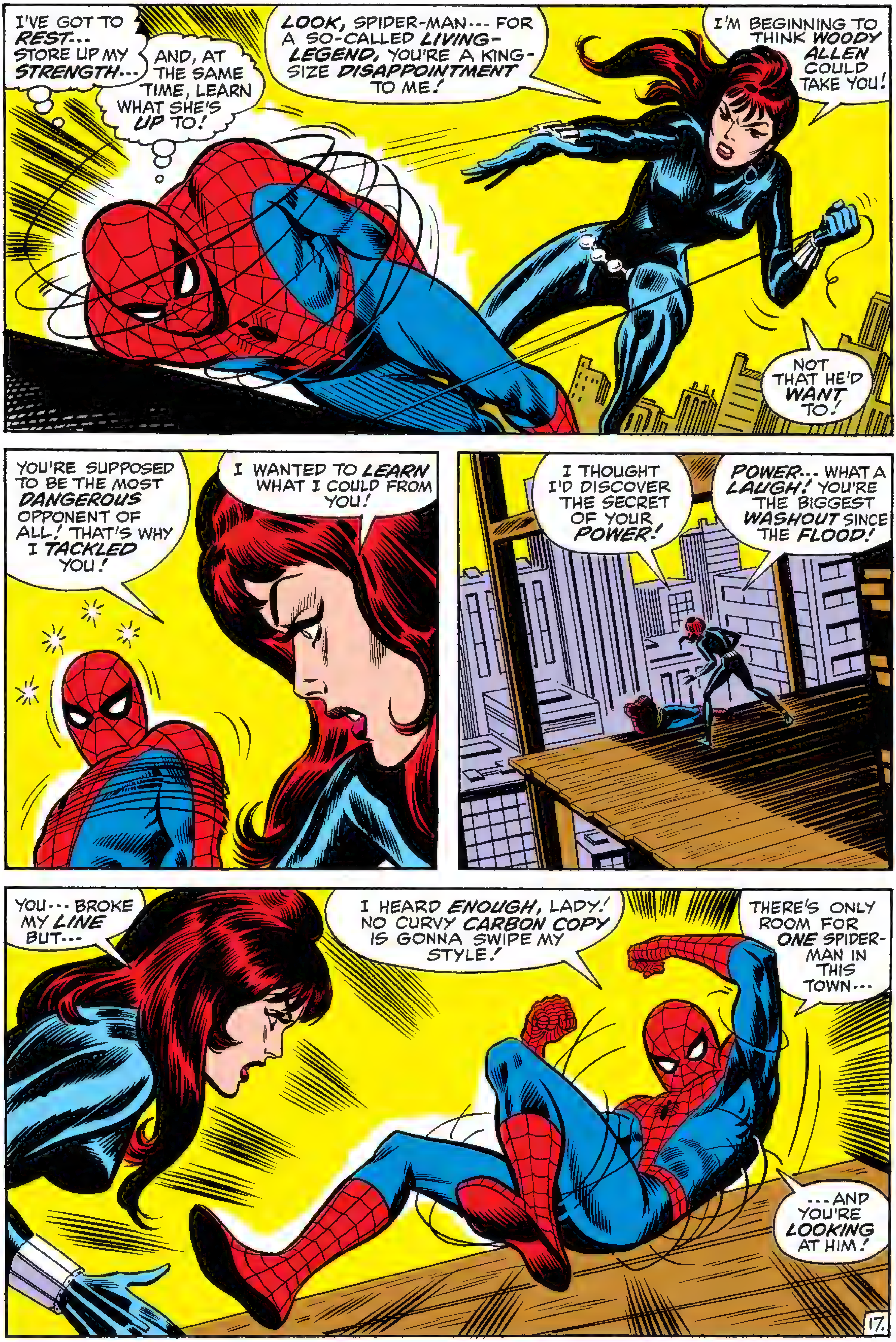

PERHAPS I OUGHT TO SWING PAST *AUNT MAY'S!*
IF I LOOK IN ON *HER,* IT MAY STOP ME FROM THINKING ABOUT *MYSELF* SO MUCH!
AND, AS *SPIDER-MAN* SILENTLY GLIDES TOWARDS THE MODEST LITTLE FRAME HOUSE IN FOREST HILLS---
I'M SURE THAT THIS HOT MILK AND COOKIES WILL HELP YOU TO *SLEEP,* MAY DEAR!
I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* CAN BE KEEPING ME *AWAKE* TO-NIGHT, ANNA---
UNLESS IT'S THE FACT THAT I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM *PETER* LATELY!
I *KNOW* I SHOULDN'T WORRY, BUT---
SHE'S SURE TO BE *ASLEEP* AT THIS HOUR, BUT I'LL ASK *ANNA WATSON* IF--- OH *NO!* IT'S *HER!* SHE *SEES* ME!
ANNA!
YES, MAY?
AT THE *WINDOW!* THERE'S--- A *FACE!*
12

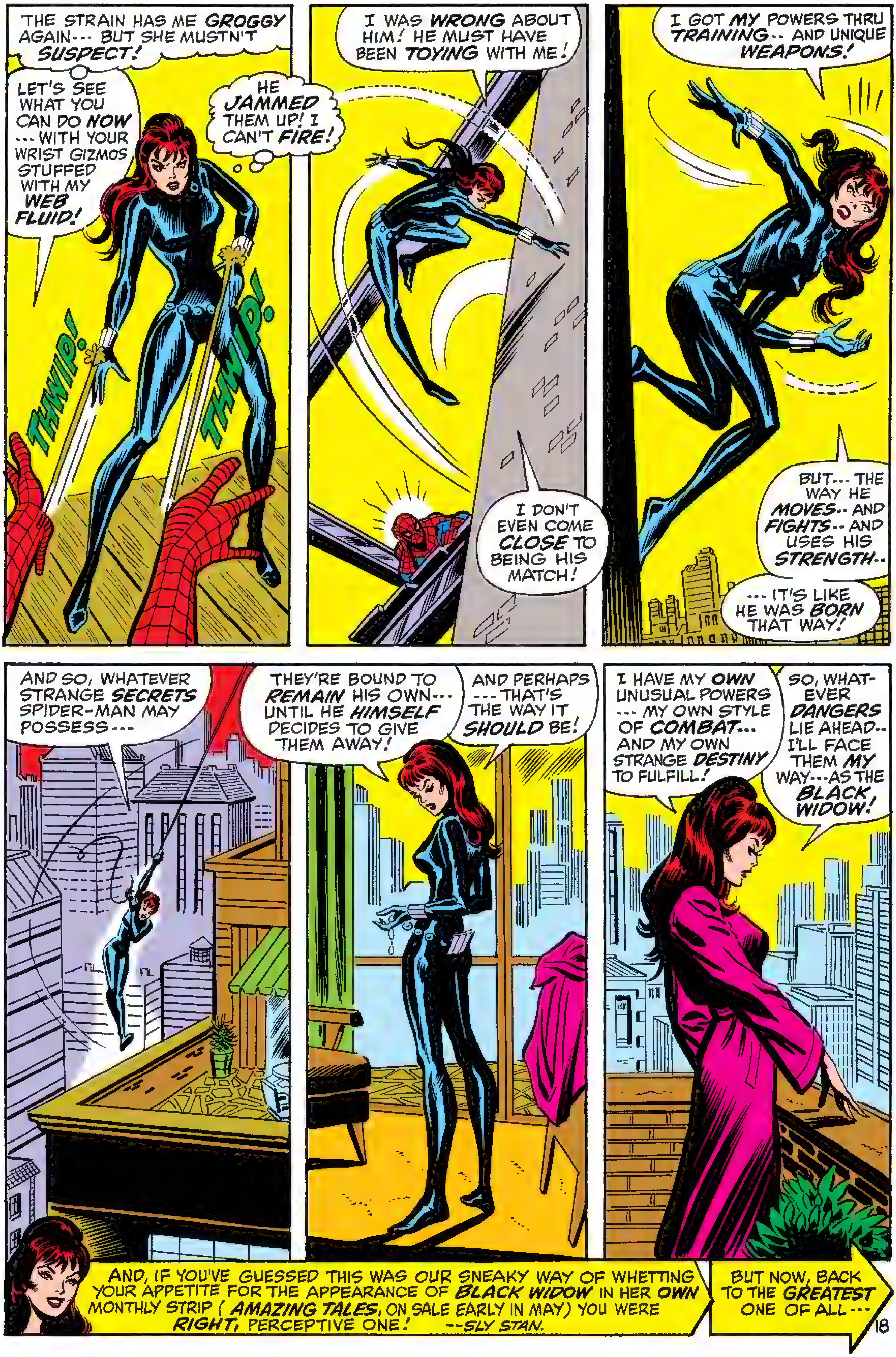

NOW, NOW DEAR! YOU MUSTN'T LET YOUR *IMAGINATION* RUN AWAY WITH YOU! YOU'RE ALL *KEYED-UP!* THAT'S WHY YOU CAN'T *SLEEP!*
I-- I SUPPOSE YOU'RE *RIGHT,* ANNA!
THE FACE--- ISN'T *THERE* ANY MORE!
BUT, IT SEEMED... SO *LIFE-LIKE!*
WELL, I ALMOST DID IT *AGAIN!*
THANKS TO MY OWN *CARELESSNESS,* I ALMOST *FRIGHTENED* THE POOR OLD LADY OUT OF HER *WITS!*
I'D BETTER HEAD *BACK*... BEFORE SOMETHING *ELSE* GOES WRONG!
BUT... AT THAT CRUCIAL MOMENT---
I'VE *FOUND* HIM--- AT *LAST!*
MY *SPIDER SENSE!* WHY IS IT *TINGLING?*
13.

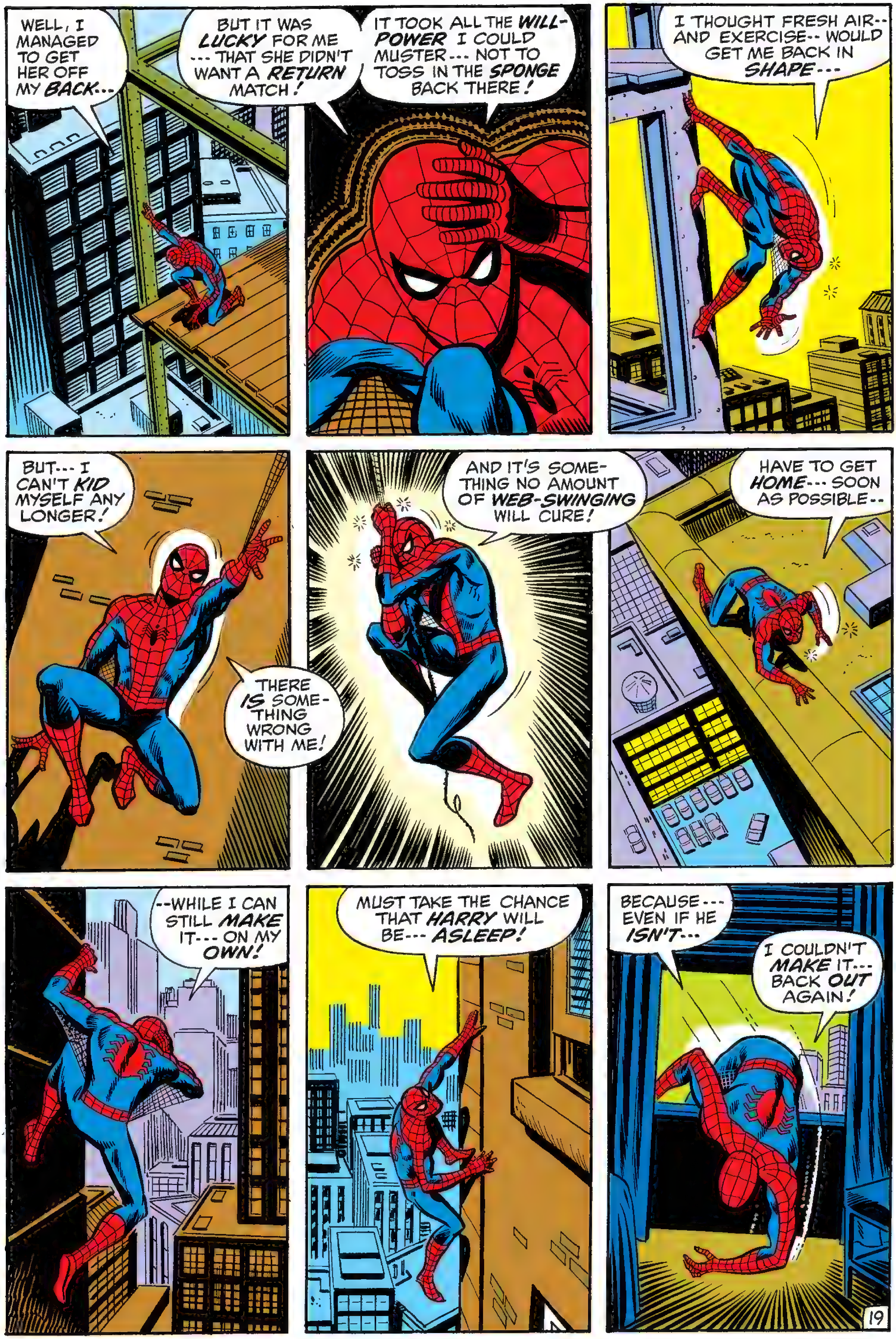

I'LL ANNOUNCE MYSELF--- WITH MY WIDOW'S BITE!
ZAK!
HE'S FALLING! BUT-- I DIDN'T STRIKE HIM THAT HARD!
IS HE PLAYING POSSUM--- OR WHAT?
I'LL LET MYSELF FALL--- TO GET OUT OF RANGE!
---TILL I KNOW WHO'S ATTACKING ME!
CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES!
I'VE GOT TO CATCH HIM!
THERE! I'VE GOT HIM SAFELY TIED TO THE GIRDER!
---SO NOW I CAN SEE WHAT MAKES HIM TICK!
WHOEVER IT IS--- IS COMING CLOSER! I CAN SENSE IT!

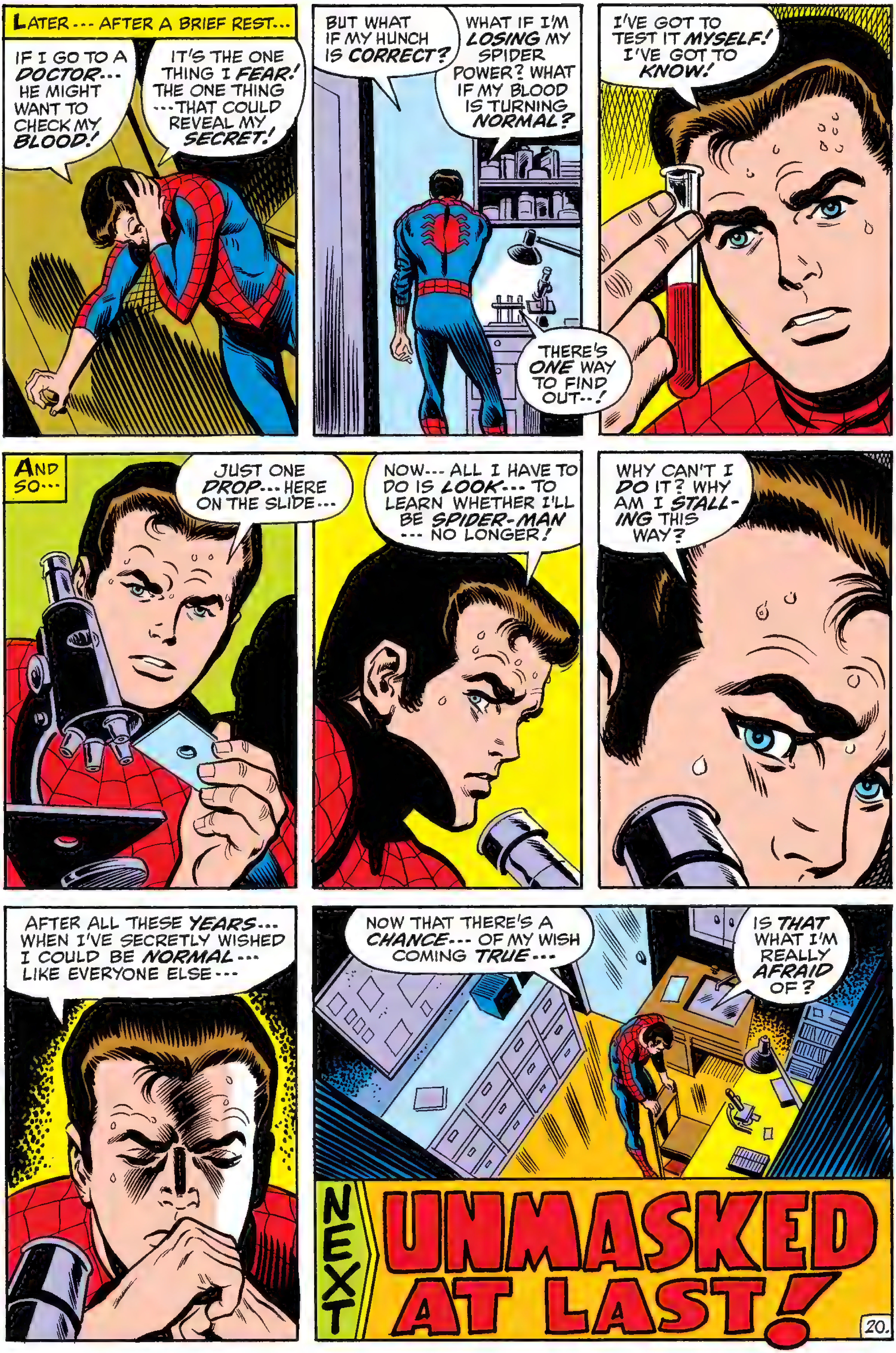

HE CAUGHT ME OFF-BALANCE --- BROKE MY LINE... KICKING OUT WITH HIS FREE FOOT!
THEN HE WAS PLAYING POSSUM!
SNAP!
NOW IT'S MY TURN!
THOP!
HAVE TO SWING TO THE WALL --- THEN SEE WHAT I'VE CAUGHT!
A FEMALE! ONE THAT I NEVER SAW BEFORE!
THESE AREN'T THE IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR AN INTRODUCTION---
BUT I'M CALLED THE BLACK WIDOW!
THE BLACK WIDOW? YOU USED TO BE WITH THE AVENGERS--- BUT NOT IN THAT GET-UP!
ANYWAY, THE IMPORTANT THING IS--- WHY'D YOU ATTACK ME?
COME CLOSER AND FIND OUT!


LOOK--- A GIRL CAN GET HURT UP HERE! GIVE ME YOUR HAND AND I'LL HELP YOU DOWN!
CAN'T STAY UP HERE MUCH LONGER ---THE WAY MY HEAD'S SPINNING 'ROUND!
HE'S WITHIN RANGE! NOW TO GET HIM!
OKAY, MASKED MAN! NOW WE'RE EVEN!
DON'T THINK I'M HELPLESS, JUST BECAUSE I'M SOFT AND CUDDLY!
UHHH!
SOFT AND CUDDLY? THAT KICK FELT LIKE A MISSOURI MULE!
THAT? THAT WAS JUST FOR STARTERS!
WAIT'LL YOU SEE THE GOODIES THAT COME NEXT!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM? WHY DOESN'T HE DEFEND HIMSELF? THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF ALL THIS IS FOR ME TO LEARN ABOUT HIS POWERS!
BUT IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY SPEED? I-- COULDN'T DUCK---FAST ENOUGH!

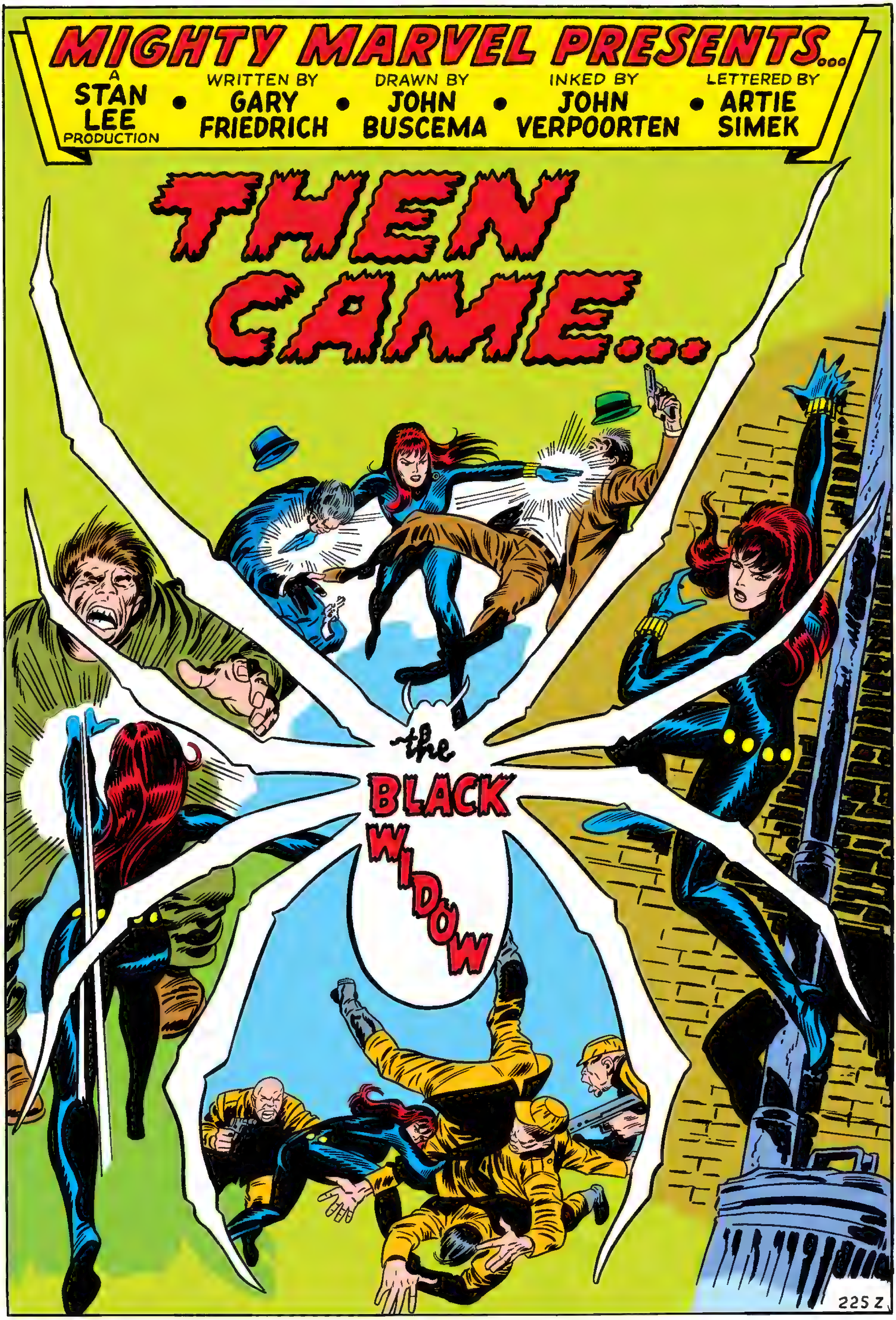

I'VE GOT TO **REST...** STORE UP MY **STRENGTH...**
AND, AT THE SAME TIME, LEARN WHAT SHE'S **UP** TO!
LOOK, SPIDER-MAN--- FOR A SO-CALLED **LIVING-LEGEND,** YOU'RE A KING-SIZE **DISAPPOINTMENT** TO ME!
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK **WOODY ALLEN** COULD TAKE YOU!
NOT THAT HE'D **WANT** TO!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE MOST **DANGEROUS** OPPONENT OF ALL! THAT'S WHY I **TACKLED** YOU!
I WANTED TO **LEARN** WHAT I COULD FROM YOU!
I THOUGHT I'D DISCOVER THE SECRET OF YOUR **POWER!**
POWER... WHAT A **LAUGH!** YOU'RE THE BIGGEST **WASHOUT** SINCE THE **FLOOD!**
YOU--- BROKE MY **LINE** BUT---
I HEARD **ENOUGH,** LADY! NO CURVY **CARBON COPY** IS GONNA SWIPE MY STYLE!
THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR **ONE** SPIDER-MAN IN THIS TOWN---
---AND YOU'RE **LOOKING** AT HIM!

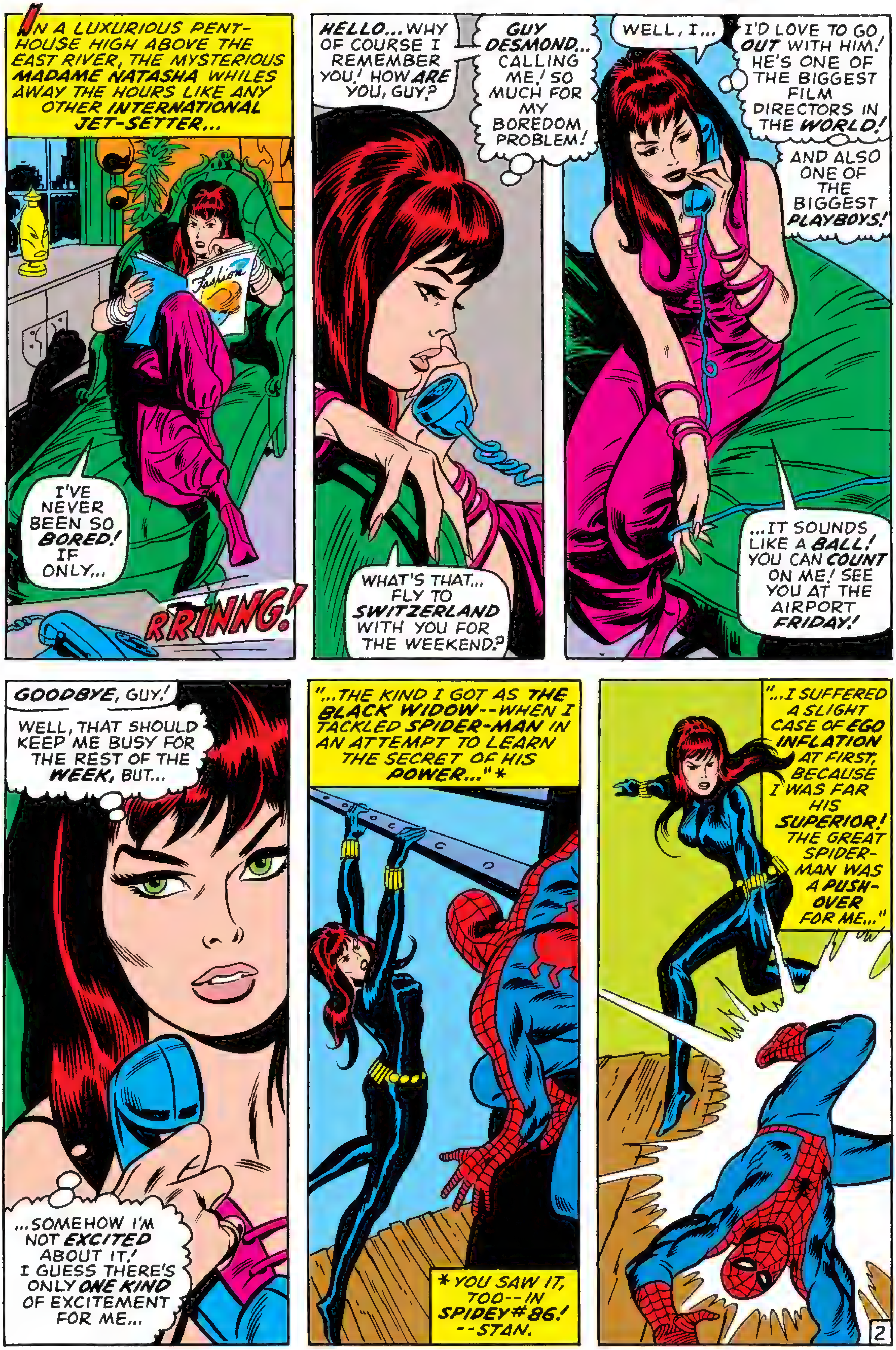

THE STRAIN HAS ME GROGGY AGAIN--- BUT SHE MUSTN'T SUSPECT!
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW ---WITH YOUR WRIST GIZMOS STUFFED WITH MY WEB FLUID!
HE JAMMED THEM UP! I CAN'T FIRE!
THWIP!
THWIP!
I WAS WRONG ABOUT HIM! HE MUST HAVE BEEN TOYING WITH ME!
I DON'T EVEN COME CLOSE TO BEING HIS MATCH!
I GOT MY POWERS THRU TRAINING.. AND UNIQUE WEAPONS!
BUT... THE WAY HE MOVES.. AND FIGHTS.. AND USES HIS STRENGTH..
...IT'S LIKE HE WAS BORN THAT WAY!
AND SO, WHATEVER STRANGE SECRETS SPIDER-MAN MAY POSSESS---
THEY'RE BOUND TO REMAIN HIS OWN--- UNTIL HE HIMSELF DECIDES TO GIVE THEM AWAY!
AND PERHAPS ---THAT'S THE WAY IT SHOULD BE!
I HAVE MY OWN UNUSUAL POWERS --- MY OWN STYLE OF COMBAT--- AND MY OWN STRANGE DESTINY TO FULFILL!
SO, WHATEVER DANGERS LIE AHEAD.. I'LL FACE THEM MY WAY---AS THE BLACK WIDOW!
AND, IF YOU'VE GUESSED THIS WAS OUR SNEAKY WAY OF WHETTING YOUR APPETITE FOR THE APPEARANCE OF BLACK WIDOW IN HER OWN MONTHLY STRIP (AMAZING TALES, ON SALE EARLY IN MAY) YOU WERE RIGHT, PERCEPTIVE ONE! --SLY STAN.
BUT NOW, BACK TO THE GREATEST ONE OF ALL ---

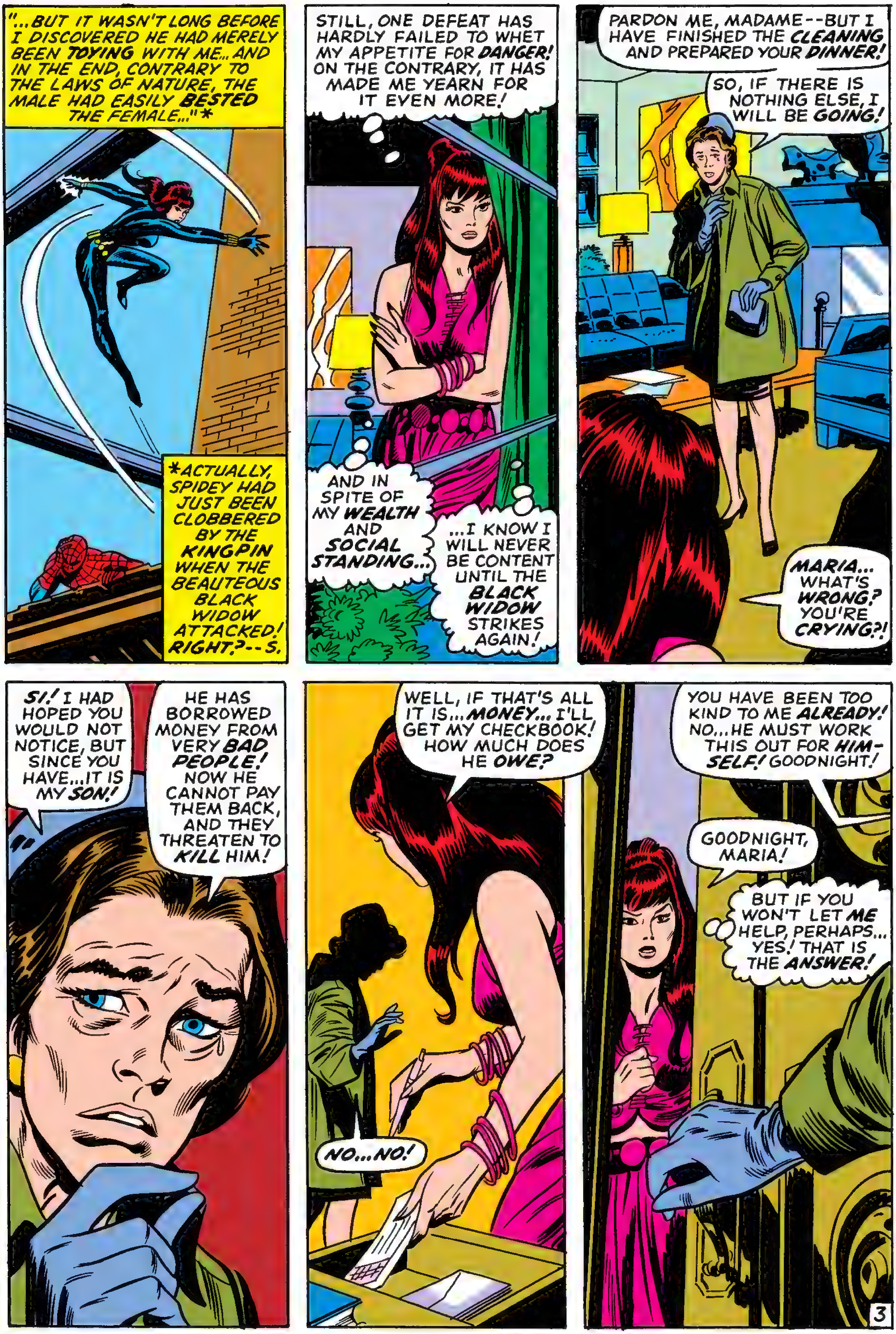

WELL, I MANAGED TO GET HER OFF MY *BACK*...
BUT IT WAS *LUCKY* FOR ME --- THAT SHE DIDN'T WANT A *RETURN* MATCH!
IT TOOK ALL THE *WILL-POWER* I COULD MUSTER --- NOT TO TOSS IN THE *SPONGE* BACK THERE!
I THOUGHT FRESH AIR-- AND EXERCISE-- WOULD GET ME BACK IN *SHAPE*---
BUT--- I CAN'T *KID* MYSELF ANY LONGER!
THERE *IS* SOME-THING WRONG WITH ME!
AND IT'S SOME-THING NO AMOUNT OF *WEB-SWINGING* WILL CURE!
HAVE TO GET *HOME*--- SOON AS POSSIBLE--
--WHILE I CAN STILL *MAKE* IT--- ON MY *OWN!*
MUST TAKE THE CHANCE THAT *HARRY* WILL BE--- *ASLEEP!*
BECAUSE--- EVEN IF HE *ISN'T*...
I COULDN'T *MAKE* IT... BACK *OUT* AGAIN!

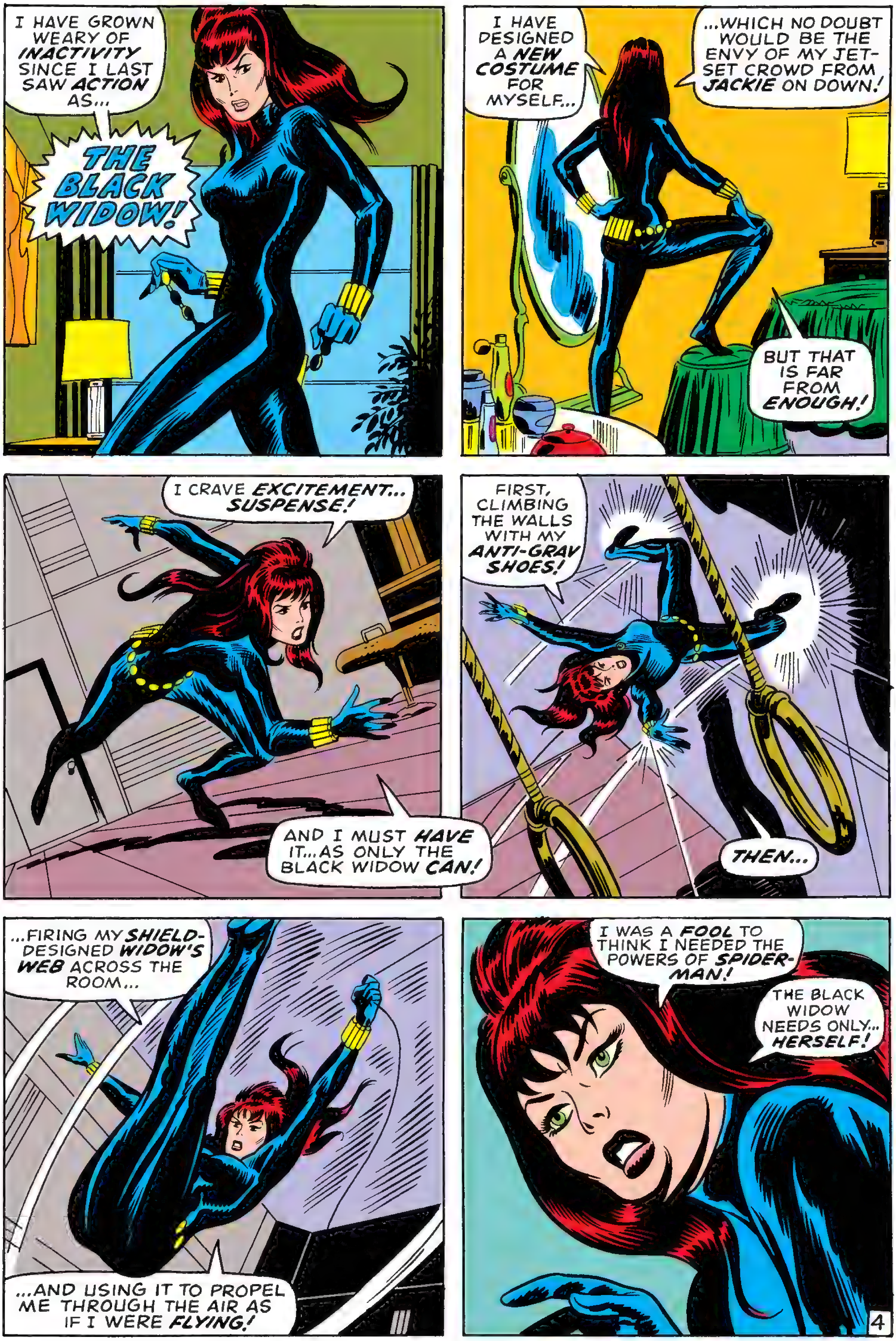

LATER --- AFTER A BRIEF REST...
IF I GO TO A DOCTOR... HE MIGHT WANT TO CHECK MY BLOOD!
IT'S THE ONE THING I FEAR! THE ONE THING --- THAT COULD REVEAL MY SECRET!
BUT WHAT IF MY HUNCH IS CORRECT?
WHAT IF I'M LOSING MY SPIDER POWER? WHAT IF MY BLOOD IS TURNING NORMAL?
THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT--!
I'VE GOT TO TEST IT MYSELF! I'VE GOT TO KNOW!
AND SO---
JUST ONE DROP--- HERE ON THE SLIDE---
NOW--- ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LOOK--- TO LEARN WHETHER I'LL BE SPIDER-MAN --- NO LONGER!
WHY CAN'T I DO IT? WHY AM I STALLING THIS WAY?
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS--- WHEN I'VE SECRETLY WISHED I COULD BE NORMAL--- LIKE EVERYONE ELSE---
NOW THAT THERE'S A CHANCE--- OF MY WISH COMING TRUE---
IS THAT WHAT I'M REALLY AFRAID OF?
NEXT
UNMASKED AT LAST!

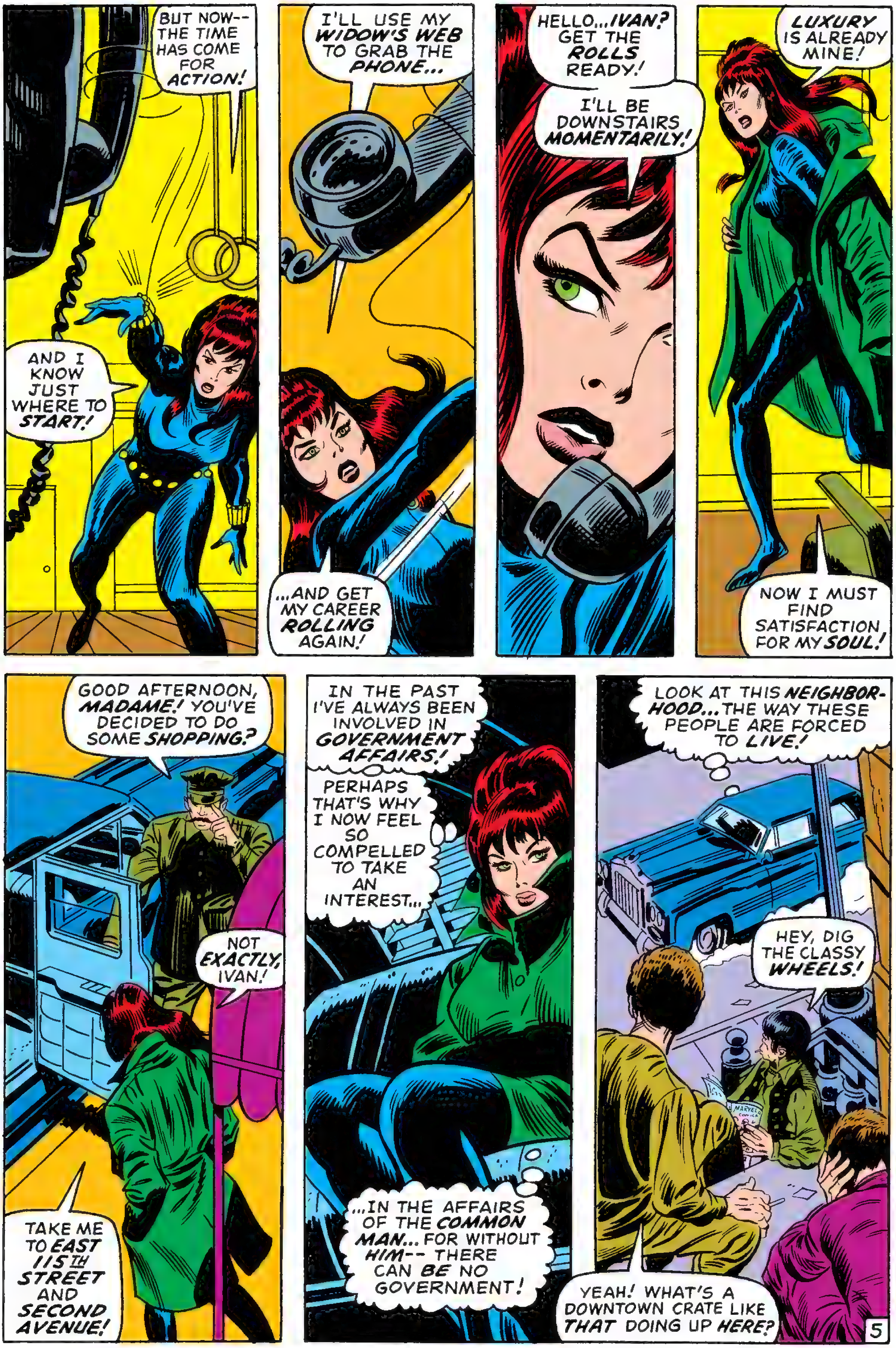
AMAZING ADVENTURES
AMAZING ADVENTURES
15¢
1
AUG
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
IN ONE MAG TOGETHER-- BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT!!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
BEWARE.. THE INHUMANS!
THE STING OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
DOUBLE DYNAMITE FROM MIGHTY MARVEL!

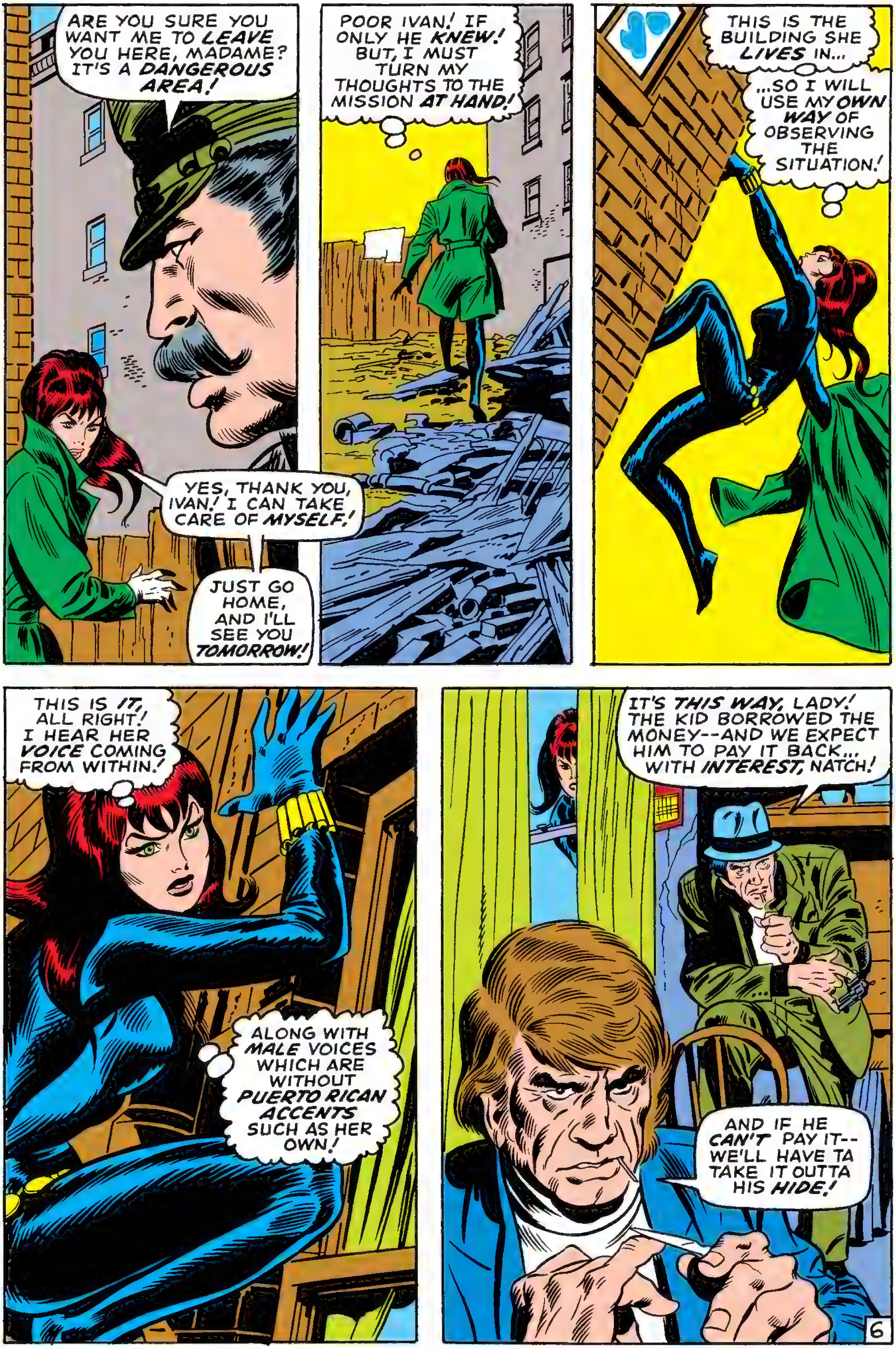

MIGHTY MARVEL PRESENTS...
A STAN LEE PRODUCTION
WRITTEN BY GARY FRIEDRICH
DRAWN BY JOHN BUSCEMA
INKED BY JOHN VERPOORTEN
LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK
THEN CAME...
the BLACK WIDOW
225 Z

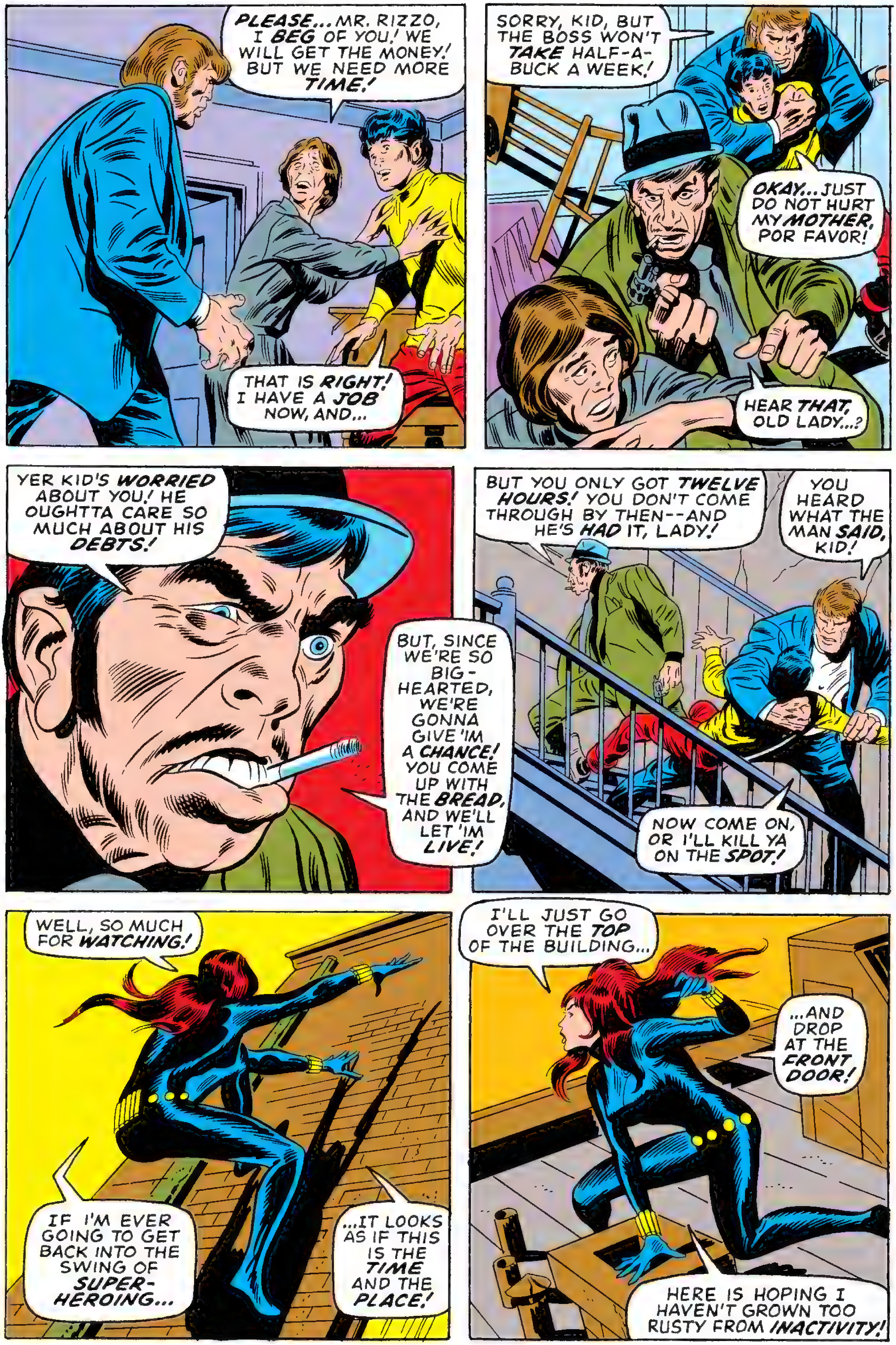

IN A LUXURIOUS PENT-HOUSE HIGH ABOVE THE EAST RIVER, THE MYSTERIOUS MADAME NATASHA WHILES AWAY THE HOURS LIKE ANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL JET-SETTER...
Fashion
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO BORED! IF ONLY...
RRINNG!
HELLO... WHY OF COURSE I REMEMBER YOU! HOW ARE YOU, GUY?
GUY DESMOND... CALLING ME! SO MUCH FOR MY BOREDOM PROBLEM!
WHAT'S THAT... FLY TO SWITZERLAND WITH YOU FOR THE WEEKEND?
WELL, I...
I'D LOVE TO GO OUT WITH HIM! HE'S ONE OF THE BIGGEST FILM DIRECTORS IN THE WORLD!
AND ALSO ONE OF THE BIGGEST PLAYBOYS!
...IT SOUNDS LIKE A BALL! YOU CAN COUNT ON ME! SEE YOU AT THE AIRPORT FRIDAY!
GOODBYE, GUY!
WELL, THAT SHOULD KEEP ME BUSY FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK, BUT...
...SOMEHOW I'M NOT EXCITED ABOUT IT! I GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE KIND OF EXCITEMENT FOR ME...
"...THE KIND I GOT AS THE BLACK WIDOW--WHEN I TACKLED SPIDER-MAN IN AN ATTEMPT TO LEARN THE SECRET OF HIS POWER..." *
* YOU SAW IT, TOO--IN SPIDEY #86! --STAN.
"...I SUFFERED A SLIGHT CASE OF EGO INFLATION AT FIRST, BECAUSE I WAS FAR HIS SUPERIOR! THE GREAT SPIDER-MAN WAS A PUSH-OVER FOR ME..."

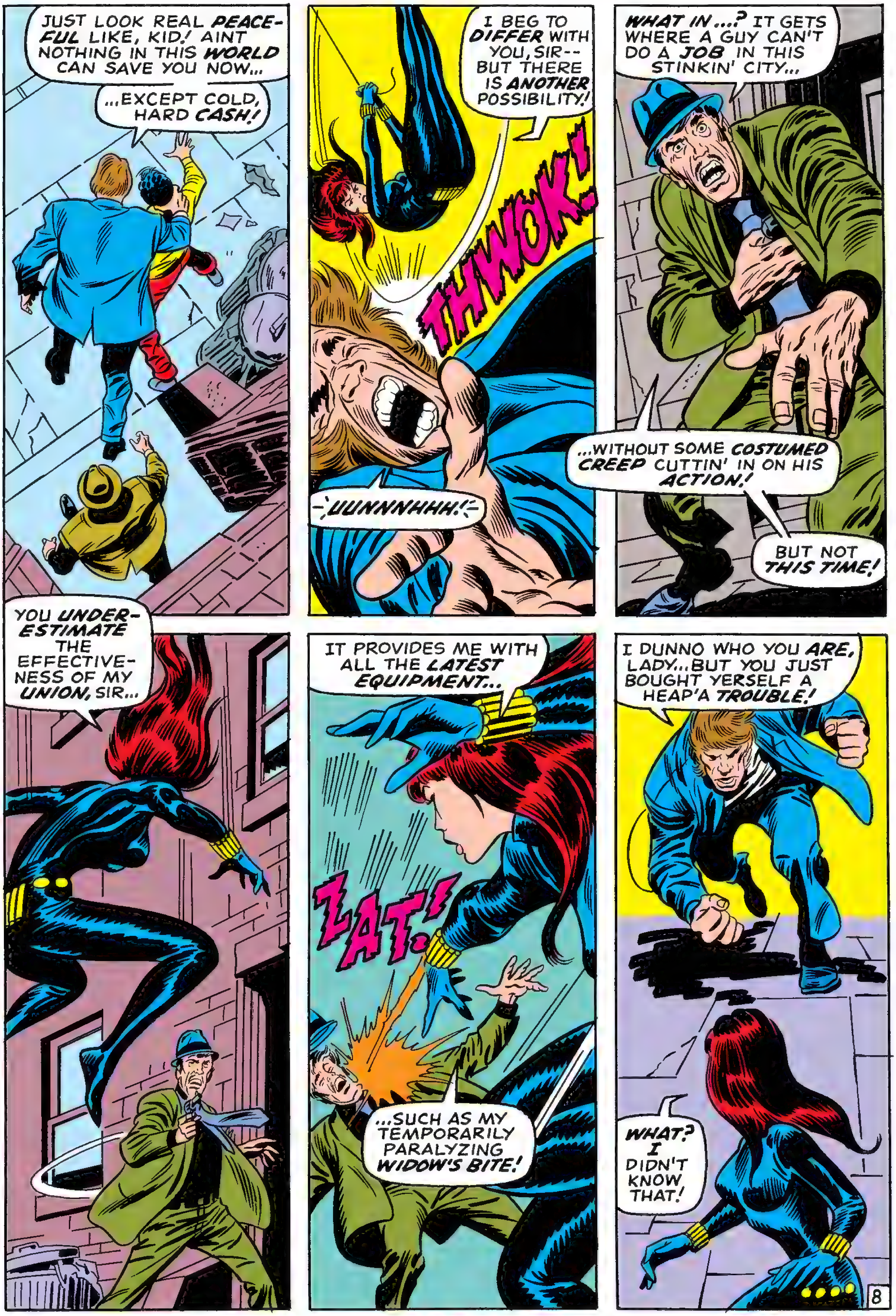

"...BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I DISCOVERED HE HAD MERELY BEEN TOYING WITH ME... AND IN THE END, CONTRARY TO THE LAWS OF NATURE, THE MALE HAD EASILY BESTED THE FEMALE..."*
*ACTUALLY, SPIDEY HAD JUST BEEN CLOBBERED BY THE KINGPIN WHEN THE BEAUTEOUS BLACK WIDOW ATTACKED! RIGHT?--S.
STILL, ONE DEFEAT HAS HARDLY FAILED TO WHET MY APPETITE FOR DANGER! ON THE CONTRARY, IT HAS MADE ME YEARN FOR IT EVEN MORE!
AND IN SPITE OF MY WEALTH AND SOCIAL STANDING...
...I KNOW I WILL NEVER BE CONTENT UNTIL THE BLACK WIDOW STRIKES AGAIN!
PARDON ME, MADAME--BUT I HAVE FINISHED THE CLEANING AND PREPARED YOUR DINNER!
SO, IF THERE IS NOTHING ELSE, I WILL BE GOING!
MARIA... WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE CRYING?!
SI! I HAD HOPED YOU WOULD NOT NOTICE, BUT SINCE YOU HAVE...IT IS MY SON!
HE HAS BORROWED MONEY FROM VERY BAD PEOPLE! NOW HE CANNOT PAY THEM BACK, AND THEY THREATEN TO KILL HIM!
WELL, IF THAT'S ALL IT IS... MONEY... I'LL GET MY CHECKBOOK! HOW MUCH DOES HE OWE?
NO...NO!
YOU HAVE BEEN TOO KIND TO ME ALREADY! NO...HE MUST WORK THIS OUT FOR HIMSELF! GOODNIGHT!
GOODNIGHT, MARIA!
BUT IF YOU WON'T LET ME HELP, PERHAPS... YES! THAT IS THE ANSWER!

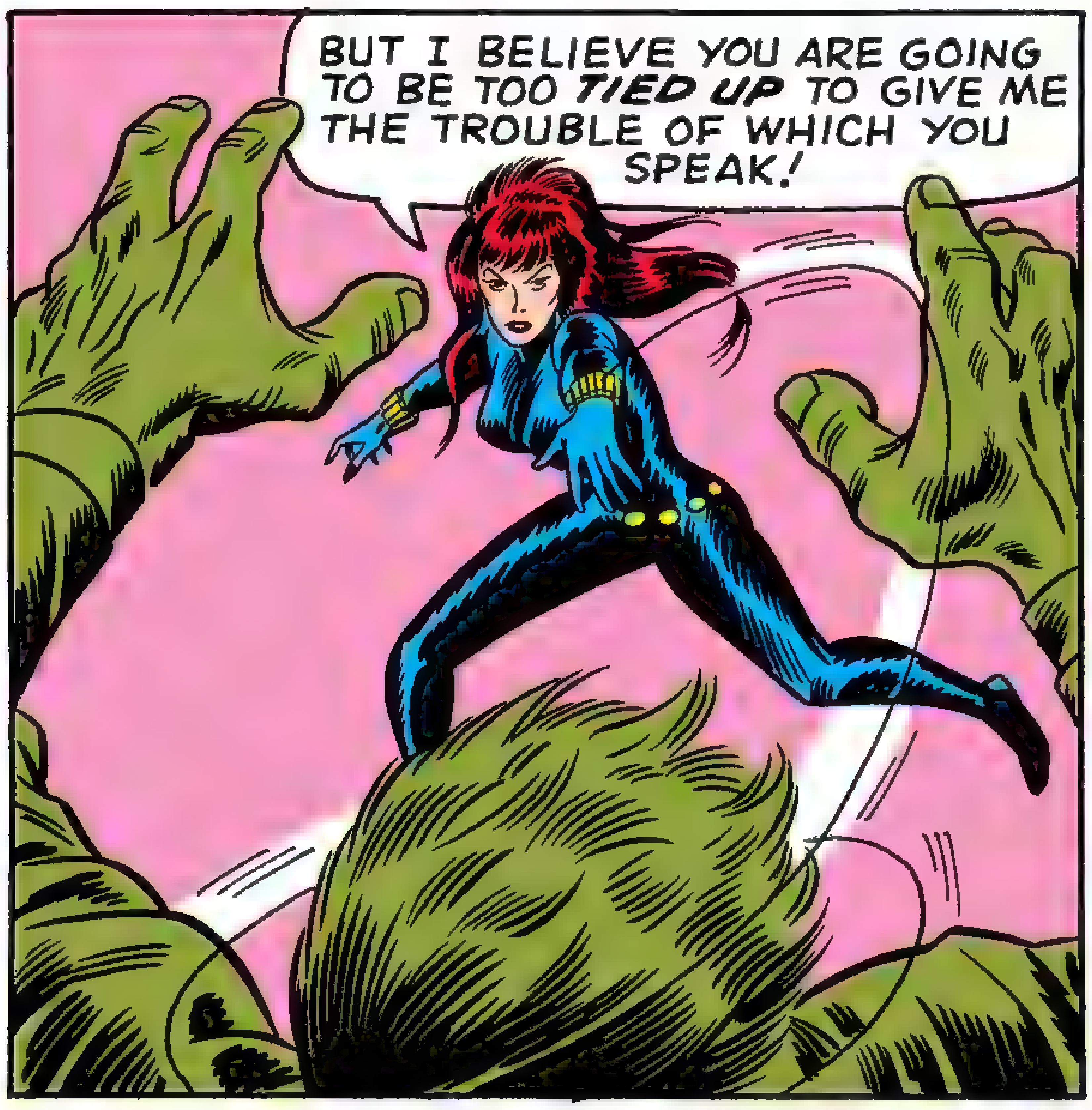

I HAVE GROWN WEARY OF *INACTIVITY* SINCE I LAST SAW *ACTION* AS...
THE BLACK WIDOW!
I HAVE DESIGNED A ***NEW COSTUME*** FOR MYSELF...
...WHICH NO DOUBT WOULD BE THE ENVY OF MY JET-SET CROWD FROM ***JACKIE*** ON DOWN!
BUT THAT IS FAR FROM ***ENOUGH!***
I CRAVE ***EXCITEMENT... SUSPENSE!***
AND I MUST ***HAVE*** IT...AS ONLY THE BLACK WIDOW ***CAN!***
FIRST, CLIMBING THE WALLS WITH MY ***ANTI-GRAV SHOES!***
THEN...
...FIRING MY ***SHIELD***-DESIGNED ***WIDOW'S WEB*** ACROSS THE ROOM...
...AND USING IT TO PROPEL ME THROUGH THE AIR AS IF I WERE ***FLYING!***
I WAS A ***FOOL*** TO THINK I NEEDED THE POWERS OF ***SPIDER-MAN!***
THE BLACK WIDOW NEEDS ONLY... ***HERSELF!***

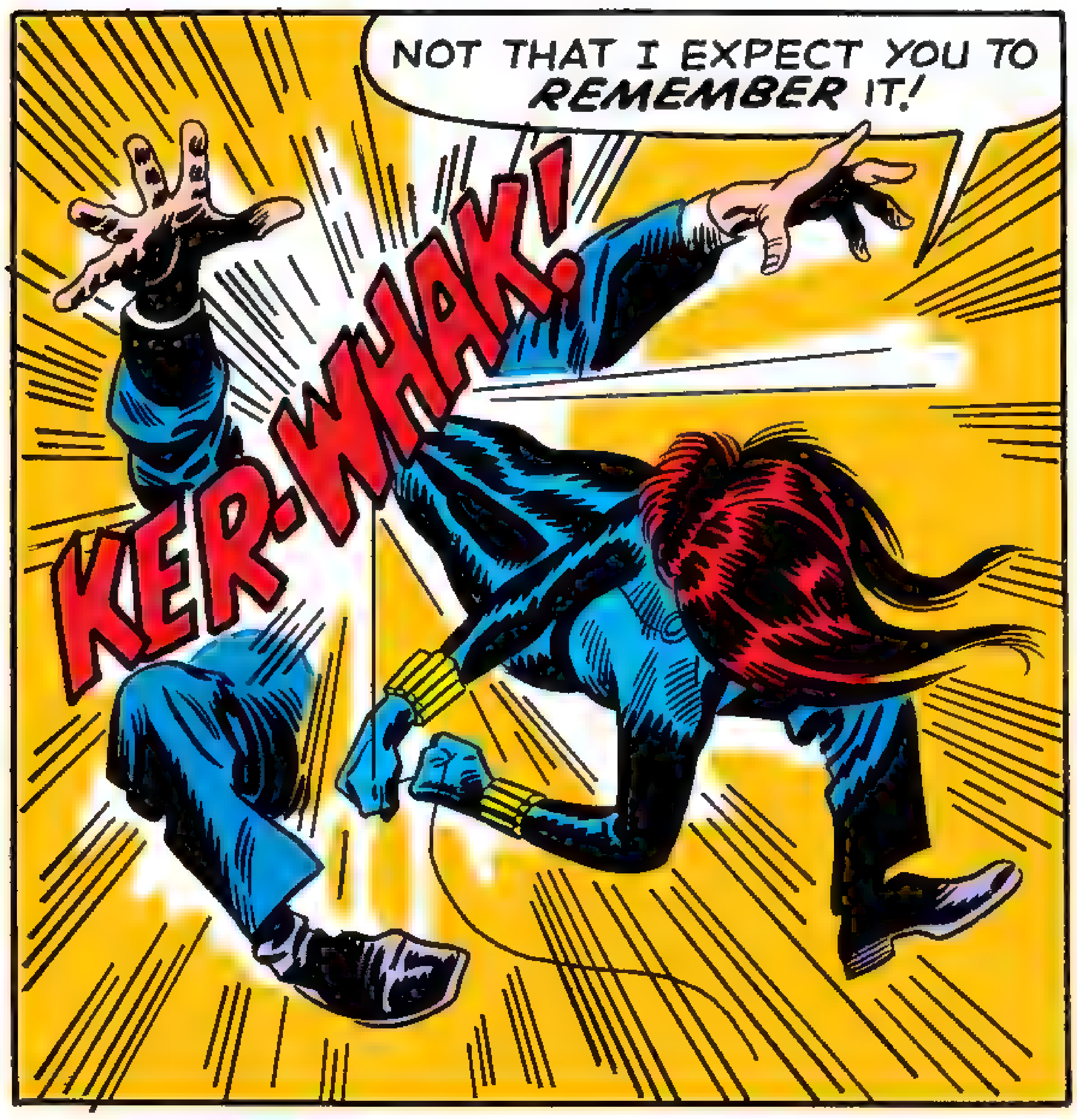

BUT NOW-- THE TIME HAS COME FOR *ACTION!*
AND I KNOW JUST WHERE TO *START!*
I'LL USE MY *WIDOW'S WEB* TO GRAB THE *PHONE...*
...AND GET MY CAREER *ROLLING* AGAIN!
HELLO... *IVAN?* GET THE *ROLLS* READY!
I'LL BE DOWNSTAIRS *MOMENTARILY!*
LUXURY IS ALREADY MINE!
NOW I MUST FIND SATISFACTION FOR MY *SOUL!*
GOOD AFTERNOON, *MADAME!* YOU'VE DECIDED TO DO SOME *SHOPPING?*
NOT *EXACTLY,* IVAN!
TAKE ME TO *EAST 115TH STREET* AND *SECOND AVENUE!*
IN THE PAST I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INVOLVED IN *GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS!*
PERHAPS THAT'S WHY I NOW FEEL SO COMPELLED TO TAKE AN INTEREST...
...IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE *COMMON MAN...* FOR WITHOUT *HIM--* THERE CAN *BE* NO GOVERNMENT!
LOOK AT THIS *NEIGHBORHOOD...* THE WAY THESE PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO *LIVE!*
HEY, DIG THE CLASSY *WHEELS!*
YEAH! WHAT'S A DOWNTOWN CRATE LIKE *THAT* DOING UP *HERE?*
MARVEL COMICS

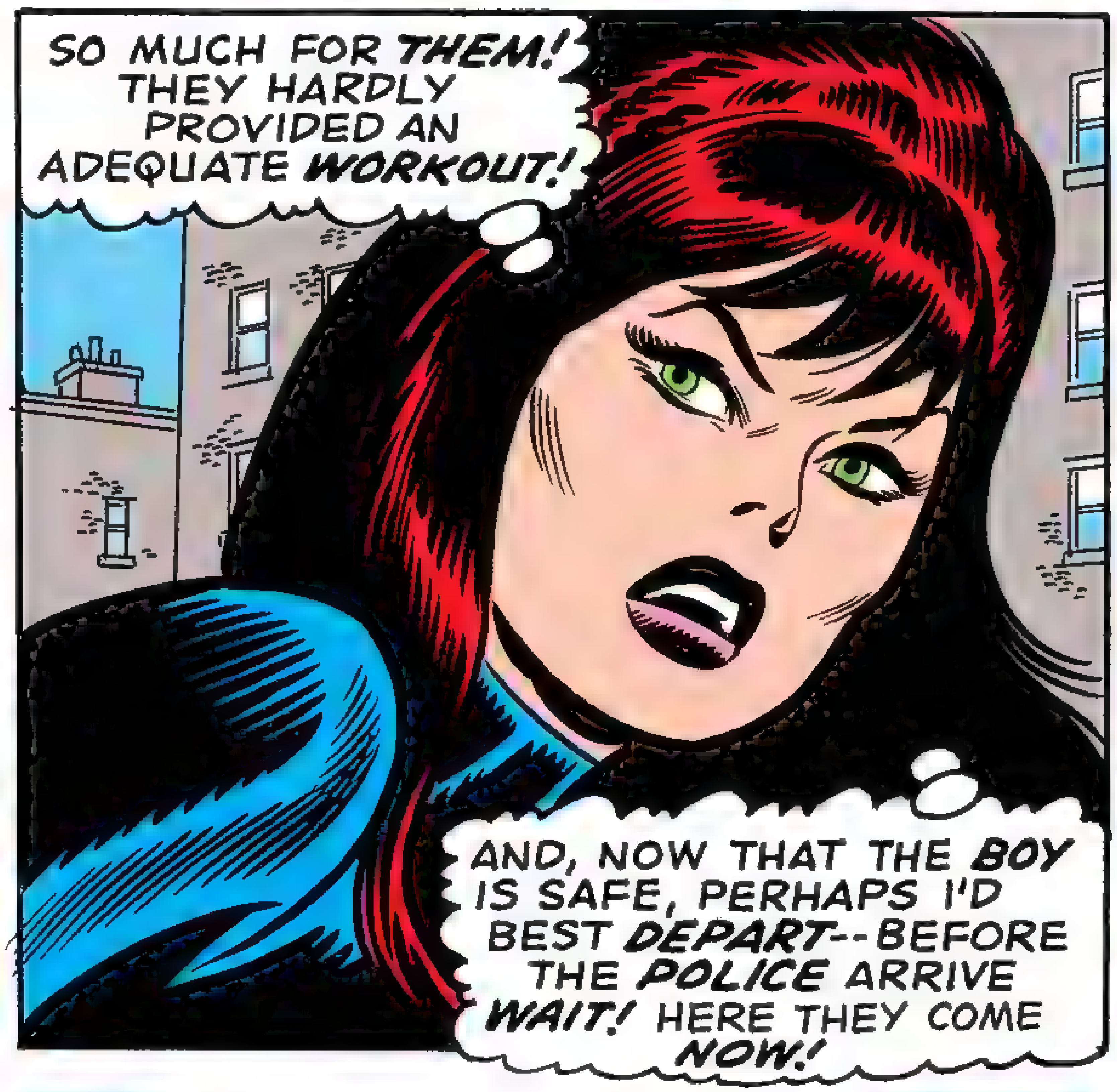

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT ME TO *LEAVE* YOU HERE, MADAME? IT'S A *DANGEROUS AREA!*
YES, THANK YOU, IVAN! I CAN TAKE CARE OF *MYSELF!*
JUST GO HOME, AND I'LL SEE YOU *TOMORROW!*
POOR IVAN! IF ONLY HE *KNEW!* BUT, I MUST TURN MY THOUGHTS TO THE MISSION *AT HAND!*
THIS IS THE BUILDING SHE *LIVES* IN...
...SO I WILL USE MY *OWN WAY* OF OBSERVING THE SITUATION!
THIS IS *IT,* ALL RIGHT! I HEAR HER *VOICE* COMING FROM WITHIN!
ALONG WITH *MALE* VOICES WHICH ARE WITHOUT *PUERTO RICAN ACCENTS* SUCH AS HER OWN!
IT'S *THIS WAY,* LADY! THE KID BORROWED THE MONEY--AND WE EXPECT HIM TO PAY IT BACK... WITH *INTEREST,* NATCH!
AND IF HE *CAN'T* PAY IT--WE'LL HAVE TA TAKE IT OUTTA HIS *HIDE!*

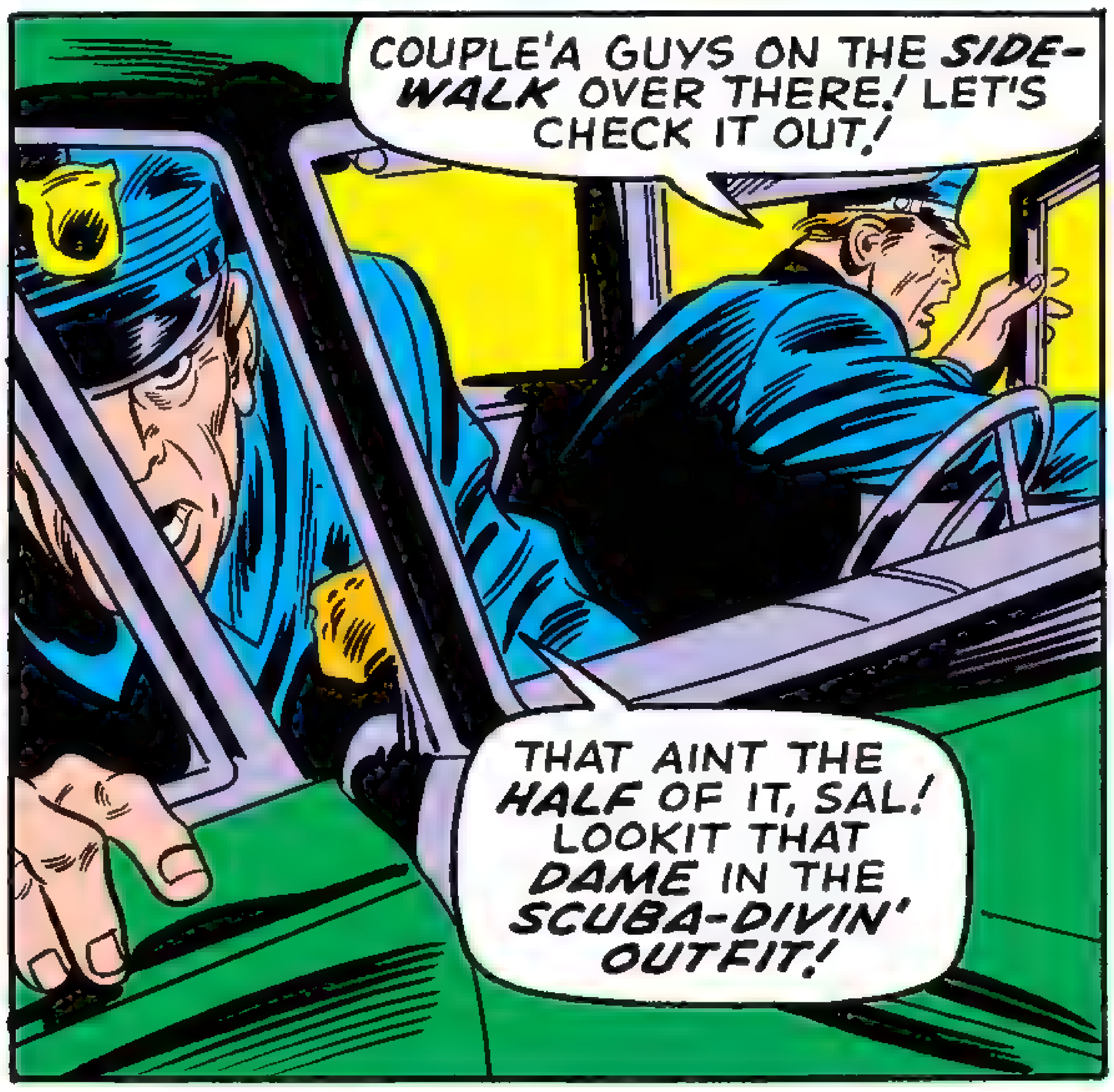

PLEASE... MR. RIZZO, I BEG OF YOU! WE WILL GET THE MONEY! BUT WE NEED MORE TIME!
THAT IS RIGHT! I HAVE A JOB NOW, AND...
SORRY, KID, BUT THE BOSS WON'T TAKE HALF-A-BUCK A WEEK!
OKAY... JUST DO NOT HURT MY MOTHER, POR FAVOR!
HEAR THAT, OLD LADY...?
YER KID'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU! HE OUGHTTA CARE SO MUCH ABOUT HIS DEBTS!
BUT, SINCE WE'RE SO BIG-HEARTED, WE'RE GONNA GIVE 'IM A CHANCE! YOU COME UP WITH THE BREAD, AND WE'LL LET 'IM LIVE!
BUT YOU ONLY GOT TWELVE HOURS! YOU DON'T COME THROUGH BY THEN--AND HE'S HAD IT, LADY!
YOU HEARD WHAT THE MAN SAID, KID!
NOW COME ON, OR I'LL KILL YA ON THE SPOT!
WELL, SO MUCH FOR WATCHING!
IF I'M EVER GOING TO GET BACK INTO THE SWING OF SUPER-HEROING...
...IT LOOKS AS IF THIS IS THE TIME AND THE PLACE!
I'LL JUST GO OVER THE TOP OF THE BUILDING...
...AND DROP AT THE FRONT DOOR!
HERE IS HOPING I HAVEN'T GROWN TOO RUSTY FROM INACTIVITY!

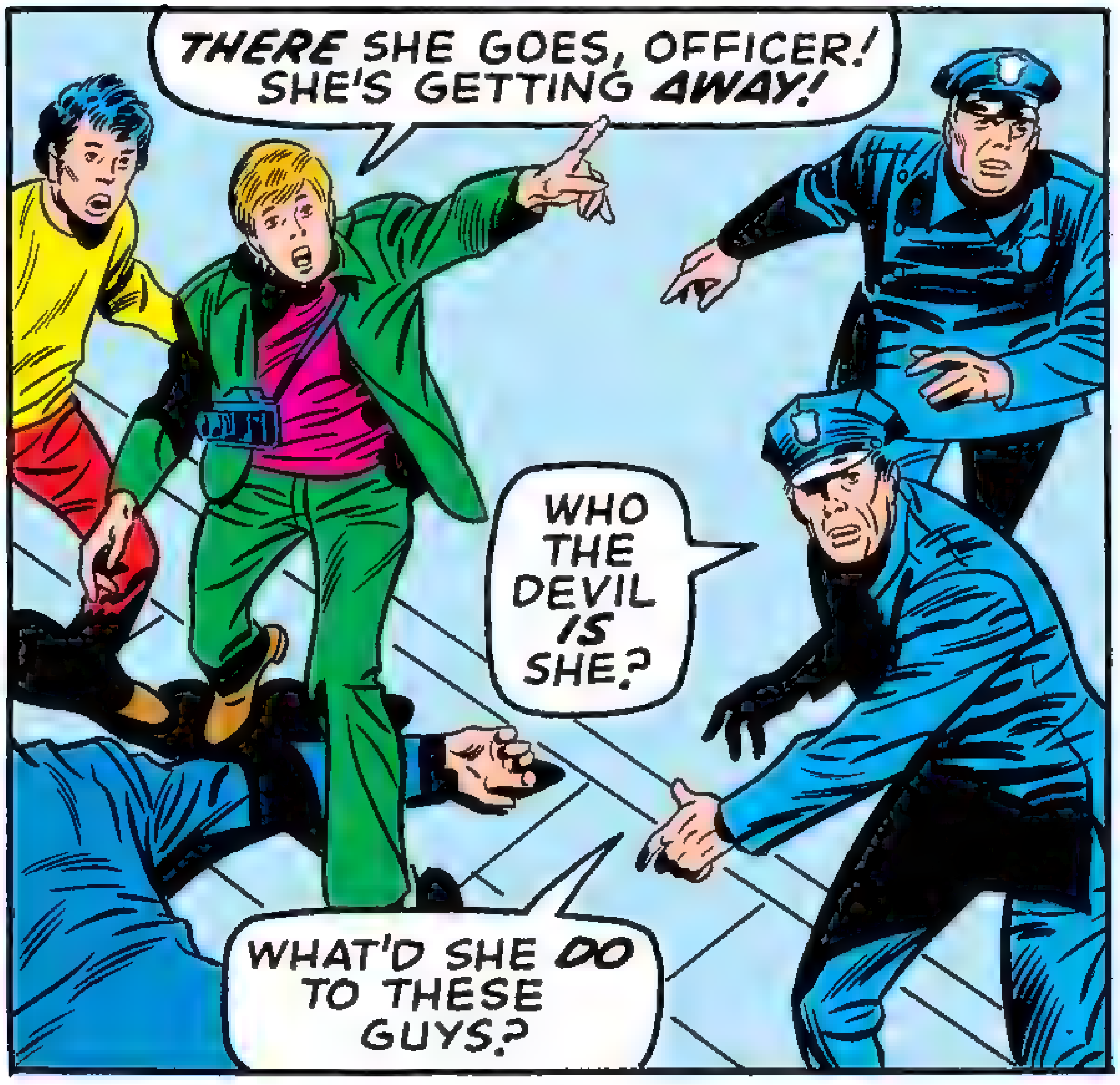

JUST LOOK REAL PEACEFUL LIKE, KID! AINT NOTHING IN THIS WORLD CAN SAVE YOU NOW...
...EXCEPT COLD, HARD CASH!
I BEG TO DIFFER WITH YOU, SIR-- BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY!
THWOK!
UUNNNHHH!
WHAT IN ...? IT GETS WHERE A GUY CAN'T DO A JOB IN THIS STINKIN' CITY...
...WITHOUT SOME COSTUMED CREEP CUTTIN' IN ON HIS ACTION!
BUT NOT THIS TIME!
YOU UNDERESTIMATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MY UNION, SIR...
IT PROVIDES ME WITH ALL THE LATEST EQUIPMENT...
ZAT!
...SUCH AS MY TEMPORARILY PARALYZING WIDOW'S BITE!
I DUNNO WHO YOU ARE, LADY...BUT YOU JUST BOUGHT YERSELF A HEAP'A TROUBLE!
WHAT? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

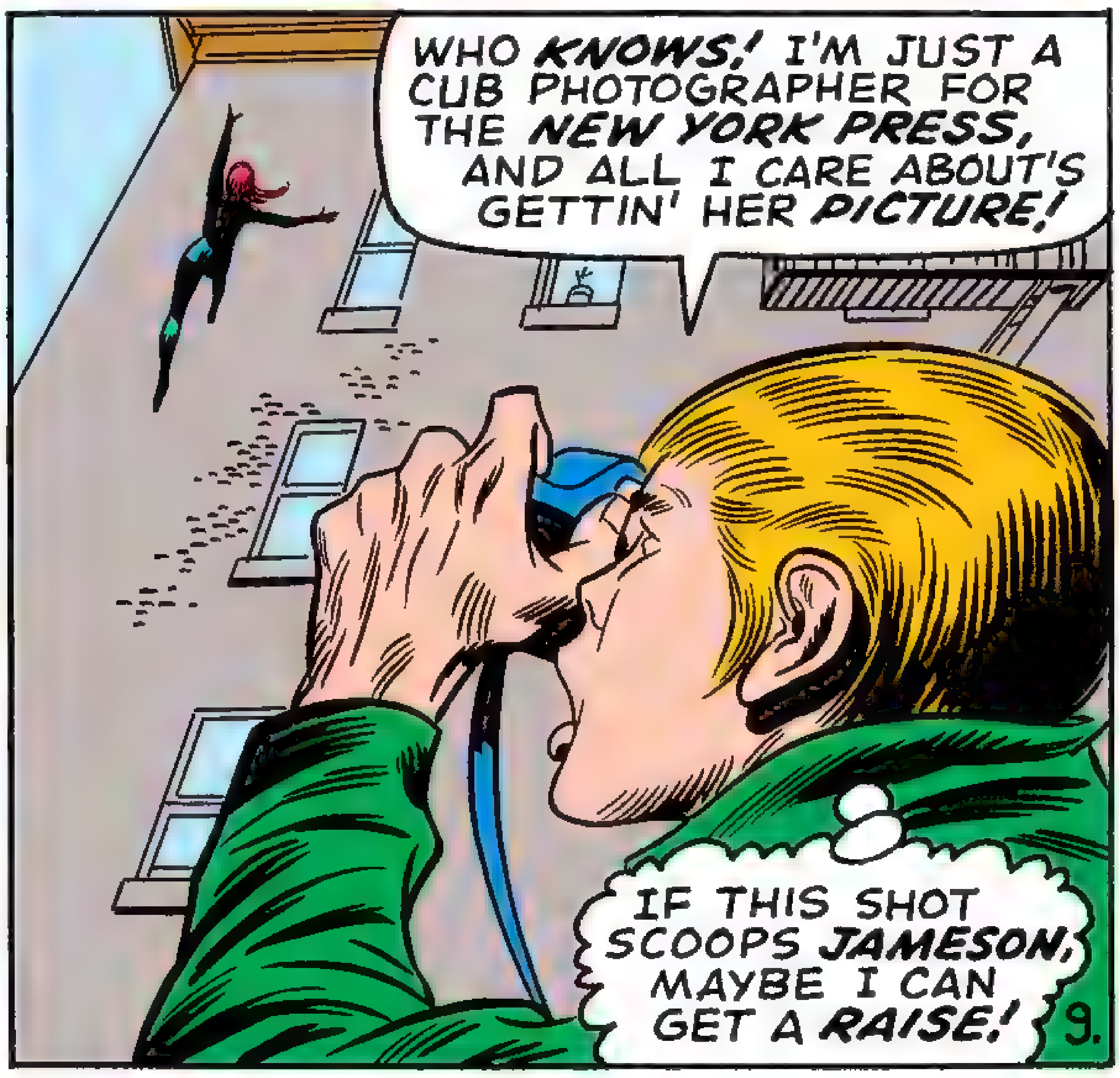

BUT I BELIEVE YOU ARE GOING TO BE TOO *TIED UP* TO GIVE ME THE TROUBLE OF WHICH YOU SPEAK!

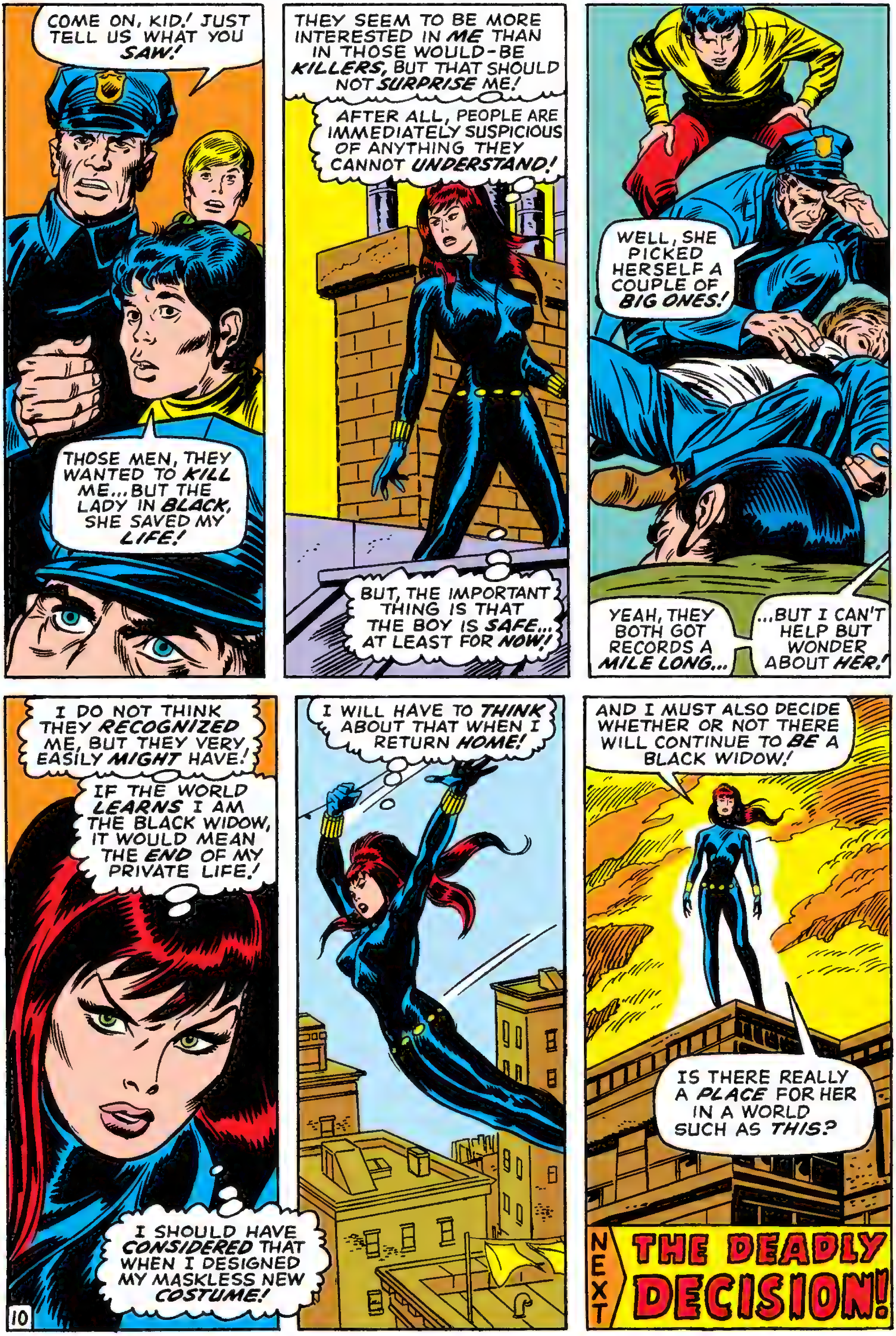

NOT THAT I EXPECT YOU TO *REMEMBER* IT!
KER-WHAK!


SO MUCH FOR *THEM!* THEY HARDLY PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE *WORKOUT!*
AND, NOW THAT THE *BOY* IS SAFE, PERHAPS I'D BEST *DEPART*--BEFORE THE *POLICE* ARRIVE *WAIT!* HERE THEY COME *NOW!*


COUPLE'A GUYS ON THE *SIDEWALK* OVER THERE! LET'S CHECK IT OUT!
THAT AINT THE *HALF* OF IT, SAL! LOOKIT THAT *DAME* IN THE *SCUBA-DIVIN' OUTFIT!*


THERE SHE GOES, OFFICER! SHE'S GETTING *AWAY!*
WHO THE DEVIL *IS* SHE?
WHAT'D SHE *DO* TO THESE GUYS?


WHO *KNOWS!* I'M JUST A CUB PHOTOGRAPHER FOR THE *NEW YORK PRESS*, AND ALL I CARE ABOUT'S GETTIN' HER *PICTURE!*
IF THIS SHOT SCOOPS *JAMESON*, MAYBE I CAN GET A *RAISE!*


COME ON, KID! JUST TELL US WHAT YOU *SAW!*
THOSE MEN, THEY WANTED TO *KILL* ME... BUT THE LADY IN *BLACK,* SHE SAVED MY *LIFE!*
THEY SEEM TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN *ME* THAN IN THOSE WOULD-BE *KILLERS,* BUT THAT SHOULD NOT *SURPRISE* ME!
AFTER ALL, PEOPLE ARE IMMEDIATELY SUSPICIOUS OF ANYTHING THEY CANNOT *UNDERSTAND!*
BUT, THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE BOY IS *SAFE...* AT LEAST FOR *NOW!*
WELL, SHE PICKED HERSELF A COUPLE OF *BIG ONES!*
YEAH, THEY BOTH GOT RECORDS A *MILE LONG...*
...BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER ABOUT *HER!*
I DO NOT THINK THEY *RECOGNIZED* ME, BUT THEY VERY EASILY *MIGHT* HAVE!
IF THE WORLD *LEARNS* I AM THE BLACK WIDOW, IT WOULD MEAN THE *END* OF MY PRIVATE LIFE!
I SHOULD HAVE *CONSIDERED* THAT WHEN I DESIGNED MY MASKLESS NEW *COSTUME!*
I WILL HAVE TO *THINK* ABOUT THAT WHEN I RETURN *HOME!*
AND I MUST ALSO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THERE WILL CONTINUE TO *BE* A BLACK WIDOW!
IS THERE REALLY A *PLACE* FOR HER IN A WORLD SUCH AS *THIS?*
NEXT
THE DEADLY DECISION!

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SEPT
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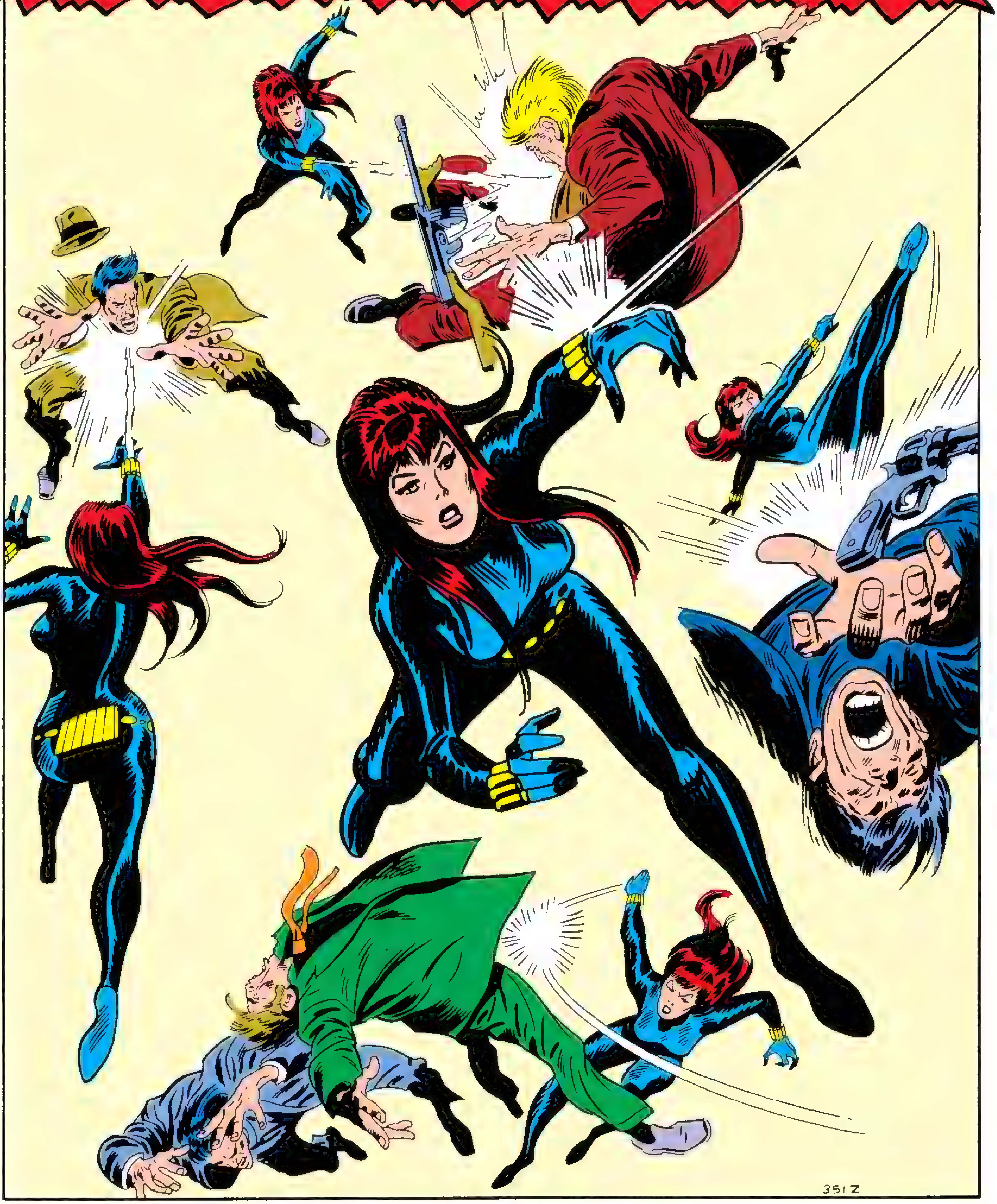
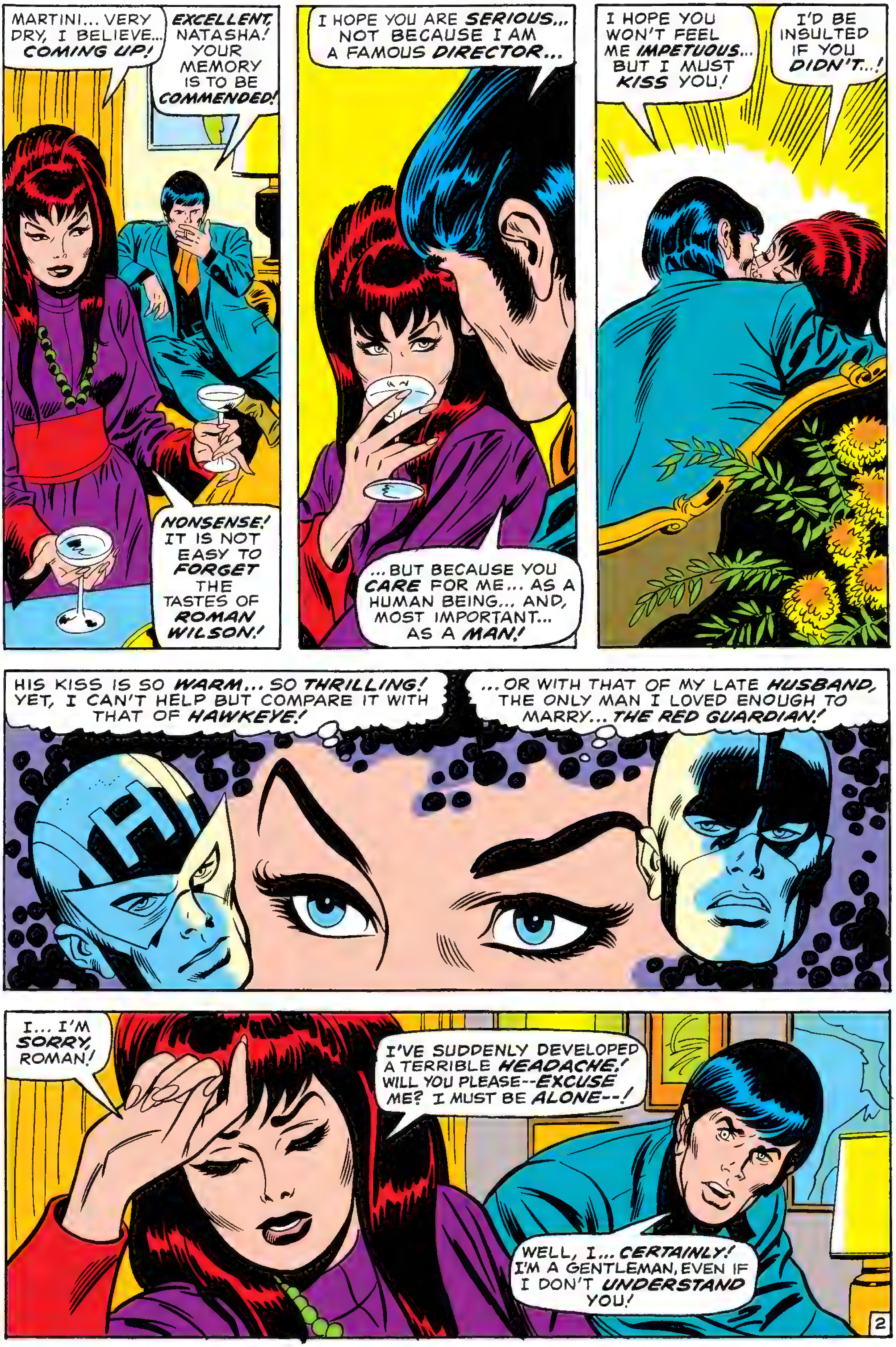
AMAZING ADVENTURES
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
NATASHA TAKES ON THE ENTIRE UNDER-WORLD!
..WHILE THE UNCANNY INHUMANS MUST FACE AND DEFEAT.. THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
'NUFF SAID!

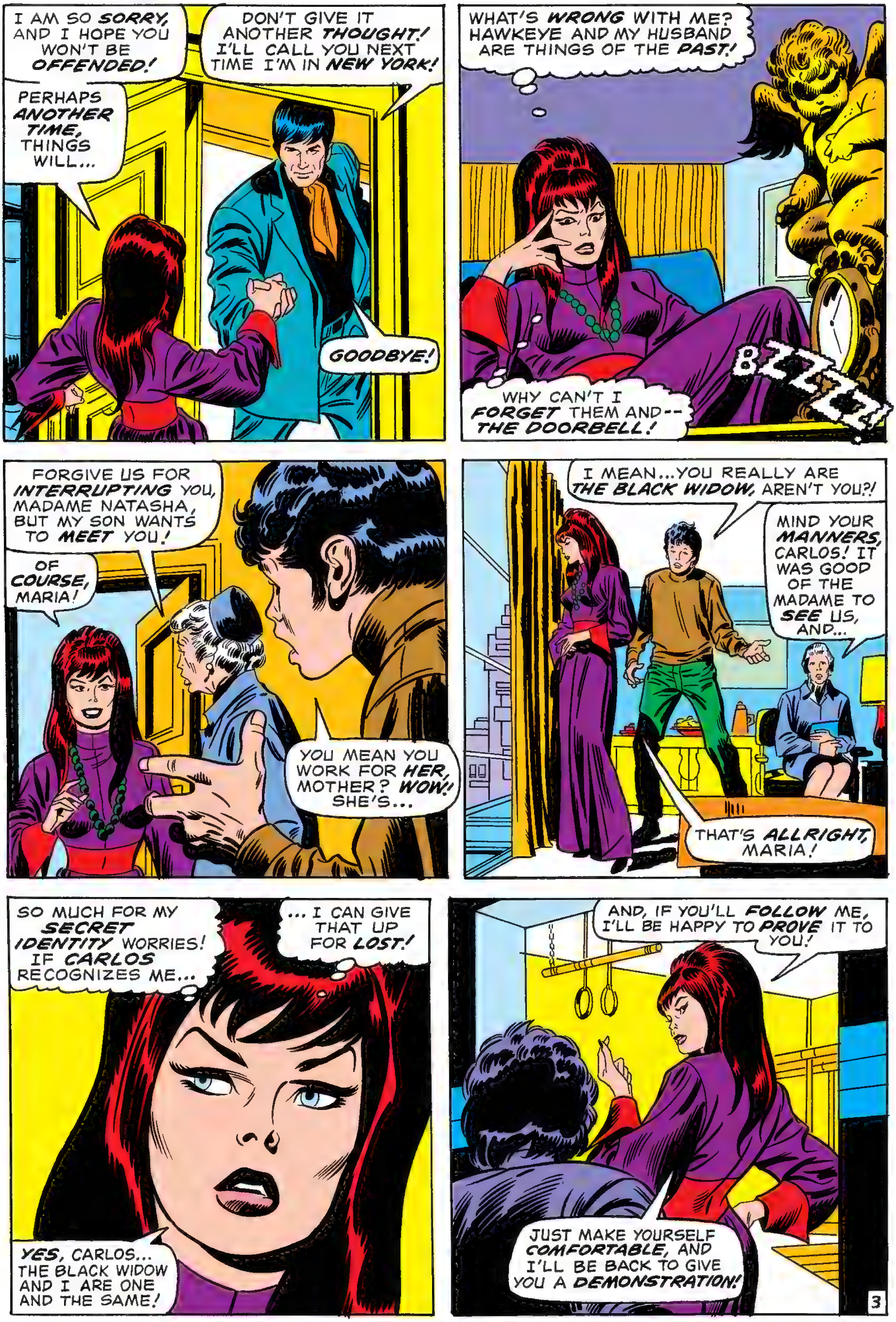
THE BLACK WIDOW!™

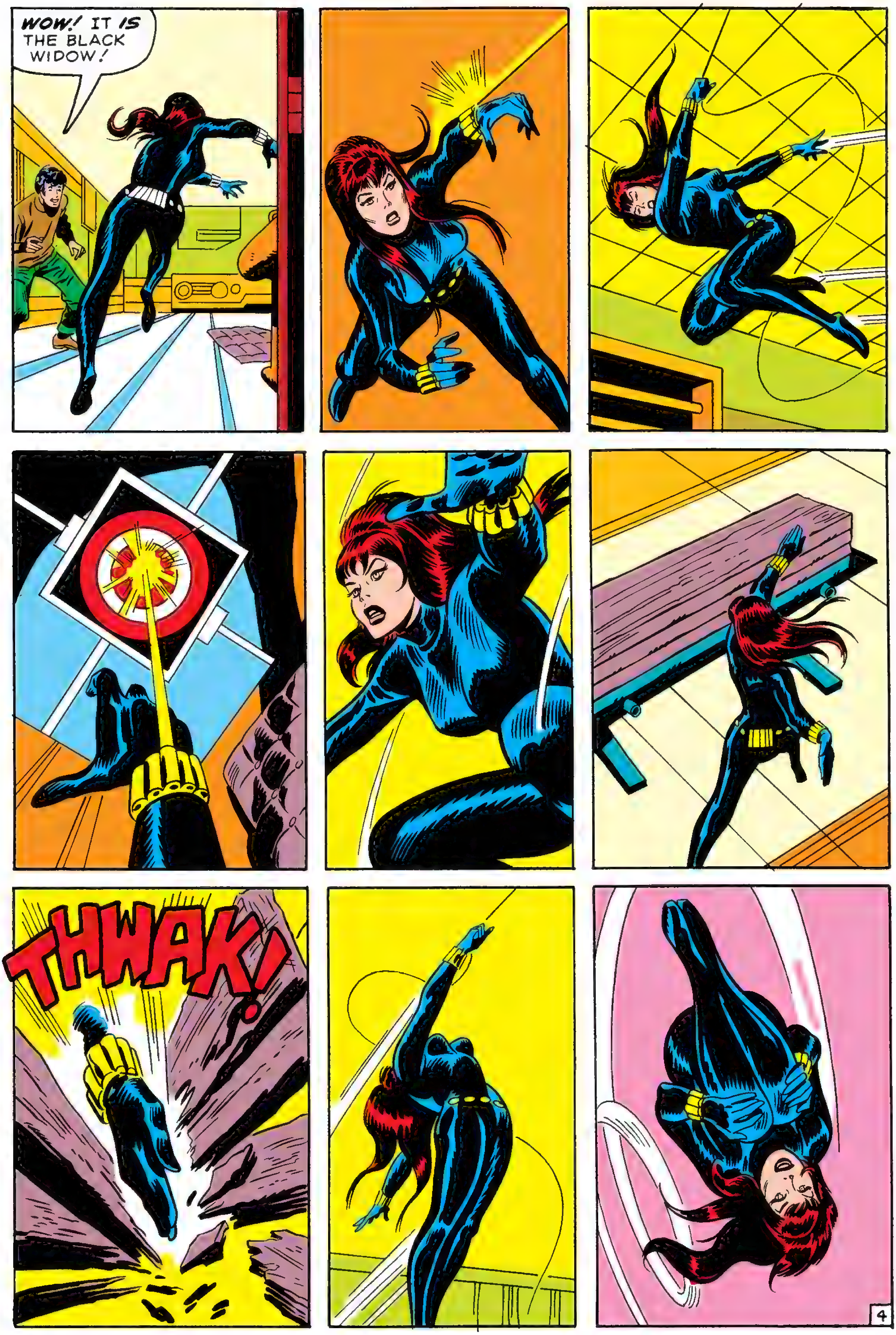
THE YOUNG WARRIORS!

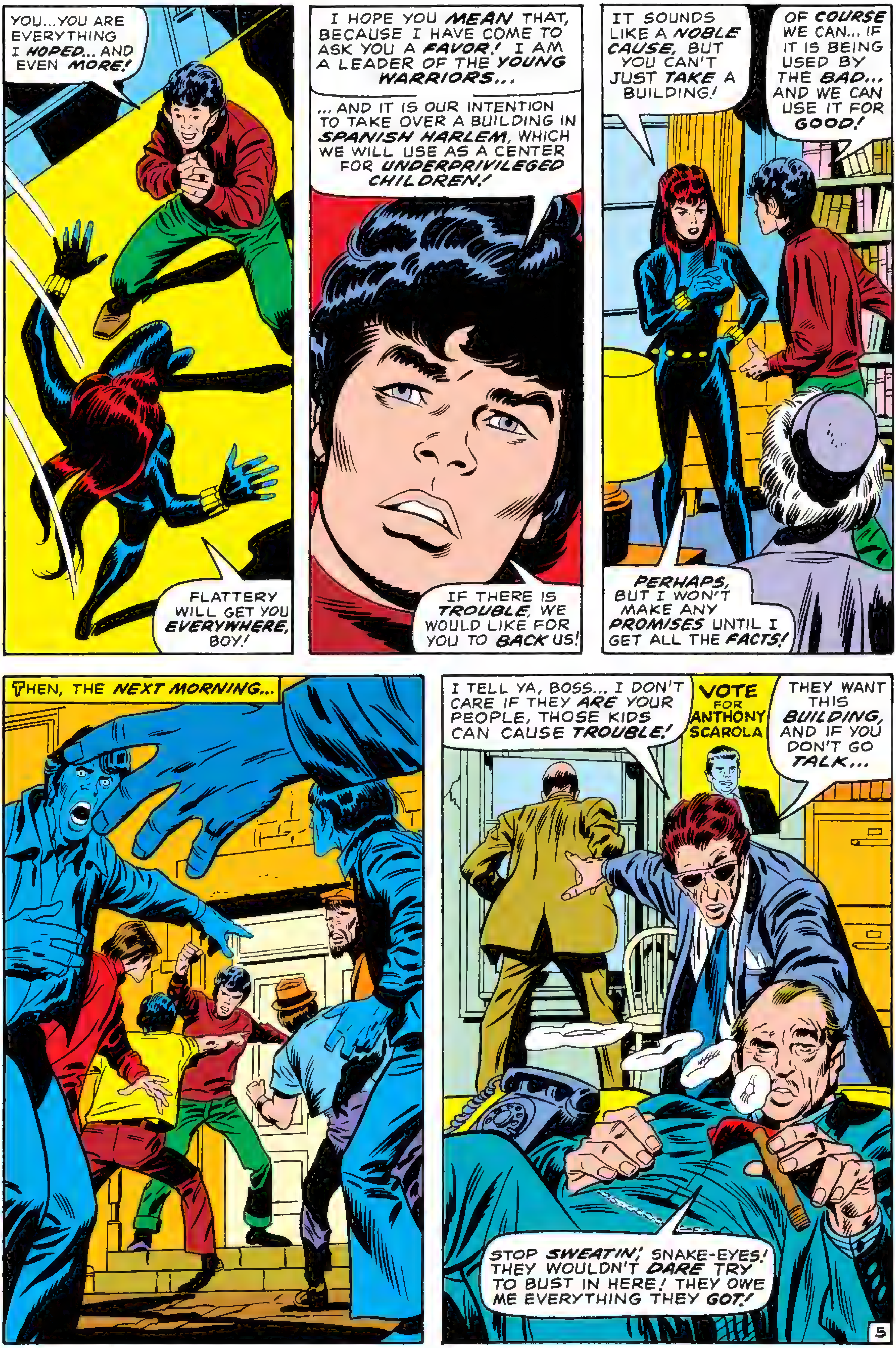
EDITED BY **STAN LEE** • WRITTEN + PLOTTED BY **GARY FRIEDRICH** • PENCILLED BY **JOHN BUSCEMA** • INKED BY **JOHN VERPOORTEN** • LETTERED BY **JEAN IZZO**

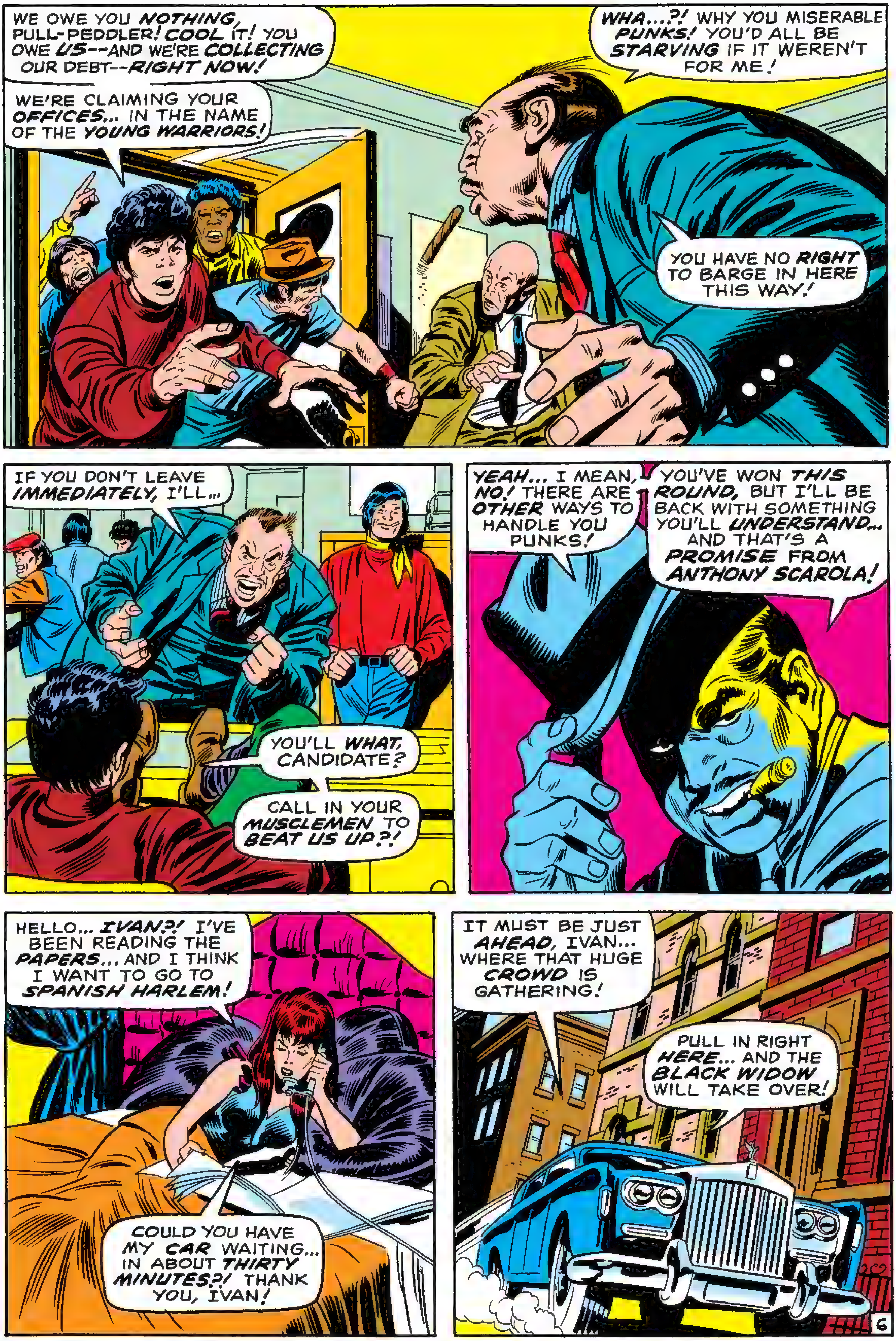


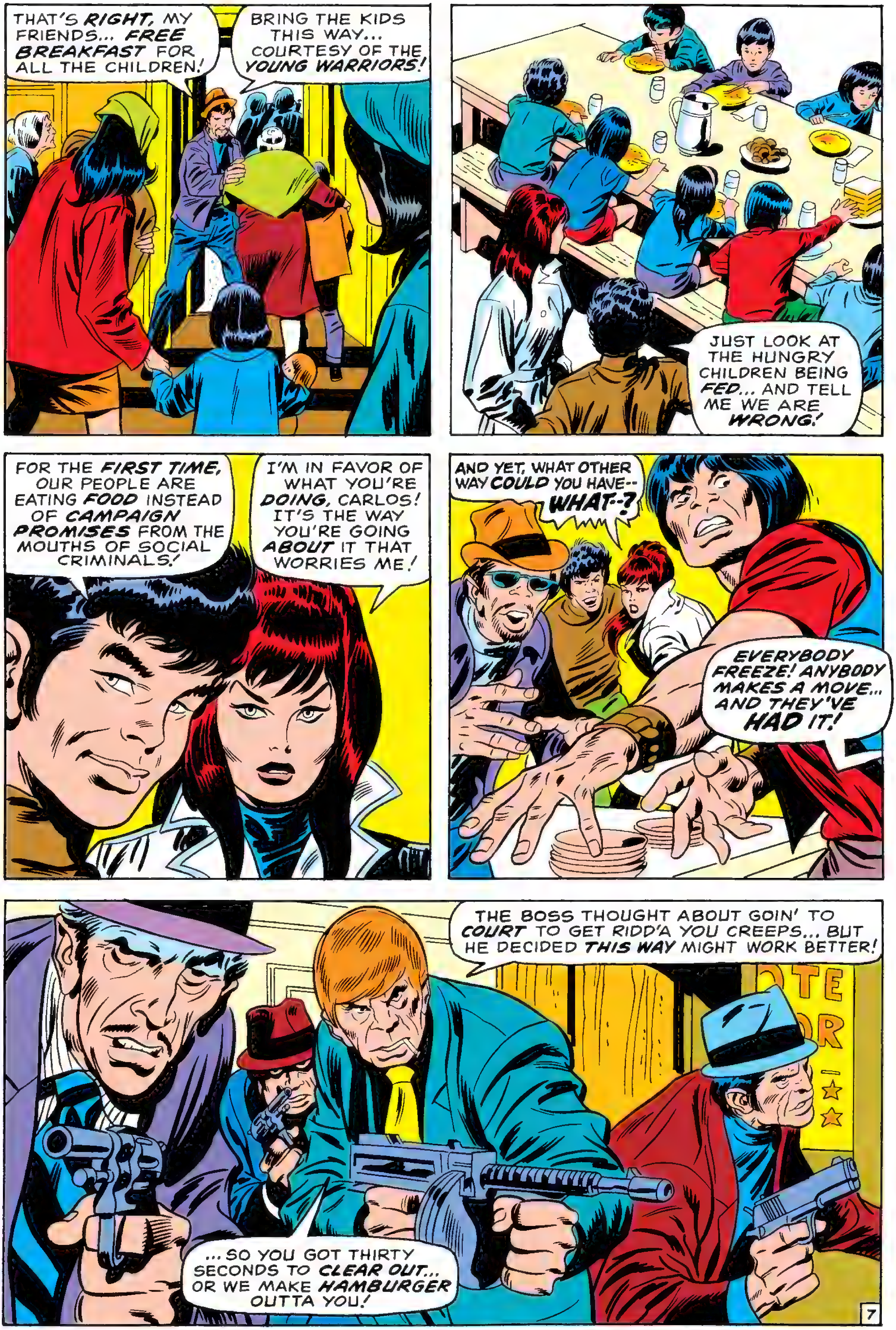

MARTINI... VERY DRY, I BELIEVE... COMING UP!
EXCELLENT, NATASHA! YOUR MEMORY IS TO BE COMMENDED!
NONSENSE! IT IS NOT EASY TO FORGET THE TASTES OF ROMAN WILSON!
I HOPE YOU ARE SERIOUS... NOT BECAUSE I AM A FAMOUS DIRECTOR...
...BUT BECAUSE YOU CARE FOR ME... AS A HUMAN BEING... AND, MOST IMPORTANT... AS A MAN!
I HOPE YOU WON'T FEEL ME IMPETUOUS... BUT I MUST KISS YOU!
I'D BE INSULTED IF YOU DIDN'T...!
HIS KISS IS SO WARM... SO THRILLING! YET, I CAN'T HELP BUT COMPARE IT WITH THAT OF HAWKEYE!
...OR WITH THAT OF MY LATE HUSBAND, THE ONLY MAN I LOVED ENOUGH TO MARRY... THE RED GUARDIAN!
I... I'M SORRY, ROMAN!
I'VE SUDDENLY DEVELOPED A TERRIBLE HEADACHE! WILL YOU PLEASE--EXCUSE ME? I MUST BE ALONE--!
WELL, I... CERTAINLY! I'M A GENTLEMAN, EVEN IF I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU!

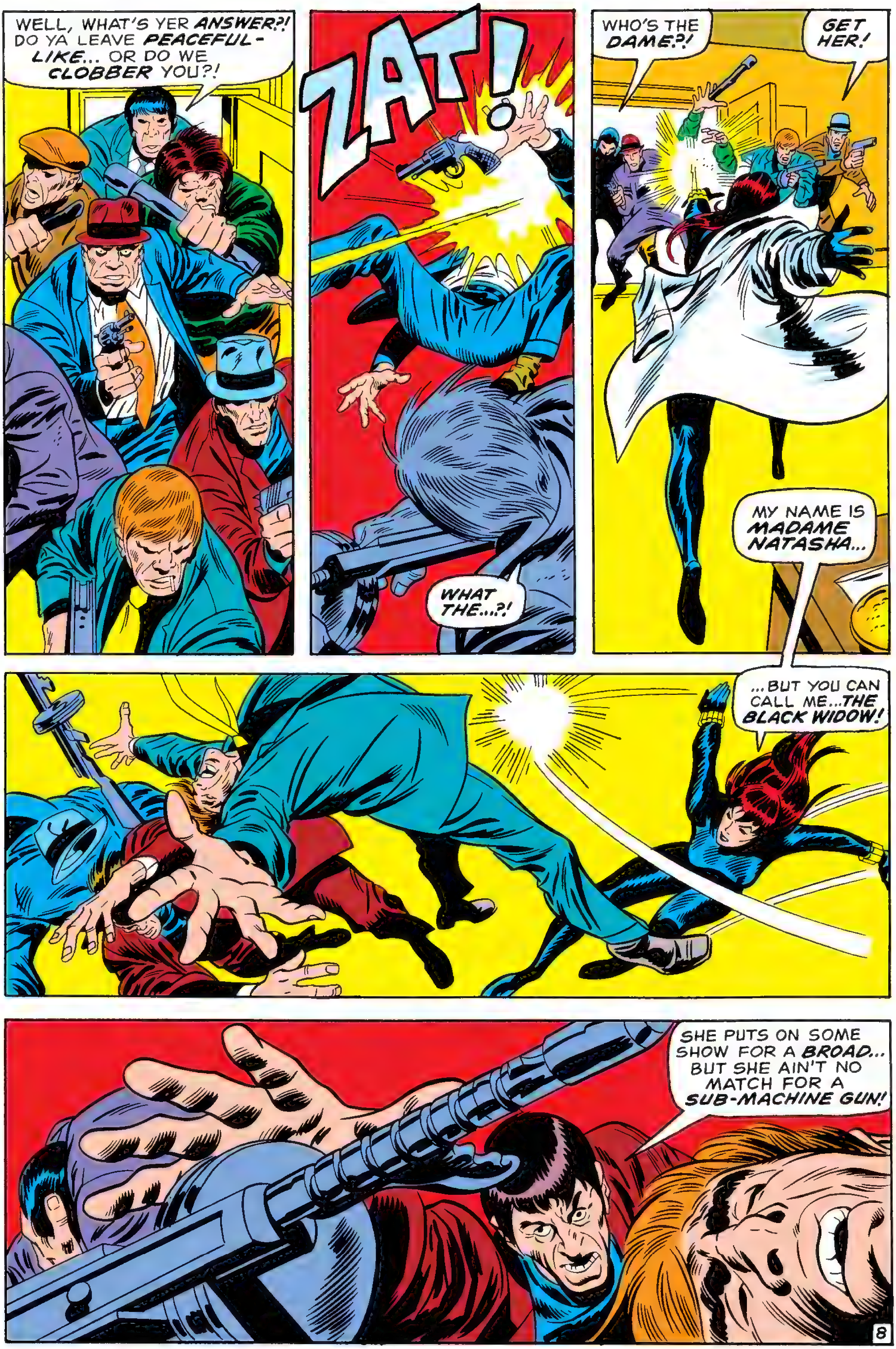

I AM SO **SORRY**, AND I HOPE YOU WON'T BE **OFFENDED!**
DON'T GIVE IT ANOTHER **THOUGHT!** I'LL CALL YOU NEXT TIME I'M IN **NEW YORK!**
PERHAPS **ANOTHER TIME**, THINGS WILL...
GOODBYE!
WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH ME? HAWKEYE AND MY HUSBAND ARE THINGS OF THE **PAST!**
WHY CAN'T I **FORGET** THEM AND-- **THE DOORBELL!**
BZZZZ!
FORGIVE US FOR **INTERRUPTING** YOU, MADAME NATASHA, BUT MY SON WANTS TO **MEET** YOU!
OF **COURSE**, MARIA!
YOU MEAN YOU WORK FOR **HER**, MOTHER? **WOW!** SHE'S...
I MEAN...YOU REALLY ARE **THE BLACK WIDOW**, AREN'T YOU?!
MIND YOUR **MANNERS**, CARLOS! IT WAS GOOD OF THE MADAME TO **SEE** US, AND...
THAT'S **ALLRIGHT**, MARIA!
SO MUCH FOR MY **SECRET IDENTITY** WORRIES! IF **CARLOS** RECOGNIZES ME...
... I CAN GIVE THAT UP FOR **LOST!**
YES, CARLOS... THE BLACK WIDOW AND I ARE ONE AND THE SAME!
AND, IF YOU'LL **FOLLOW** ME, I'LL BE HAPPY TO **PROVE** IT TO YOU!
JUST MAKE YOURSELF **COMFORTABLE**, AND I'LL BE BACK TO GIVE YOU A **DEMONSTRATION!**

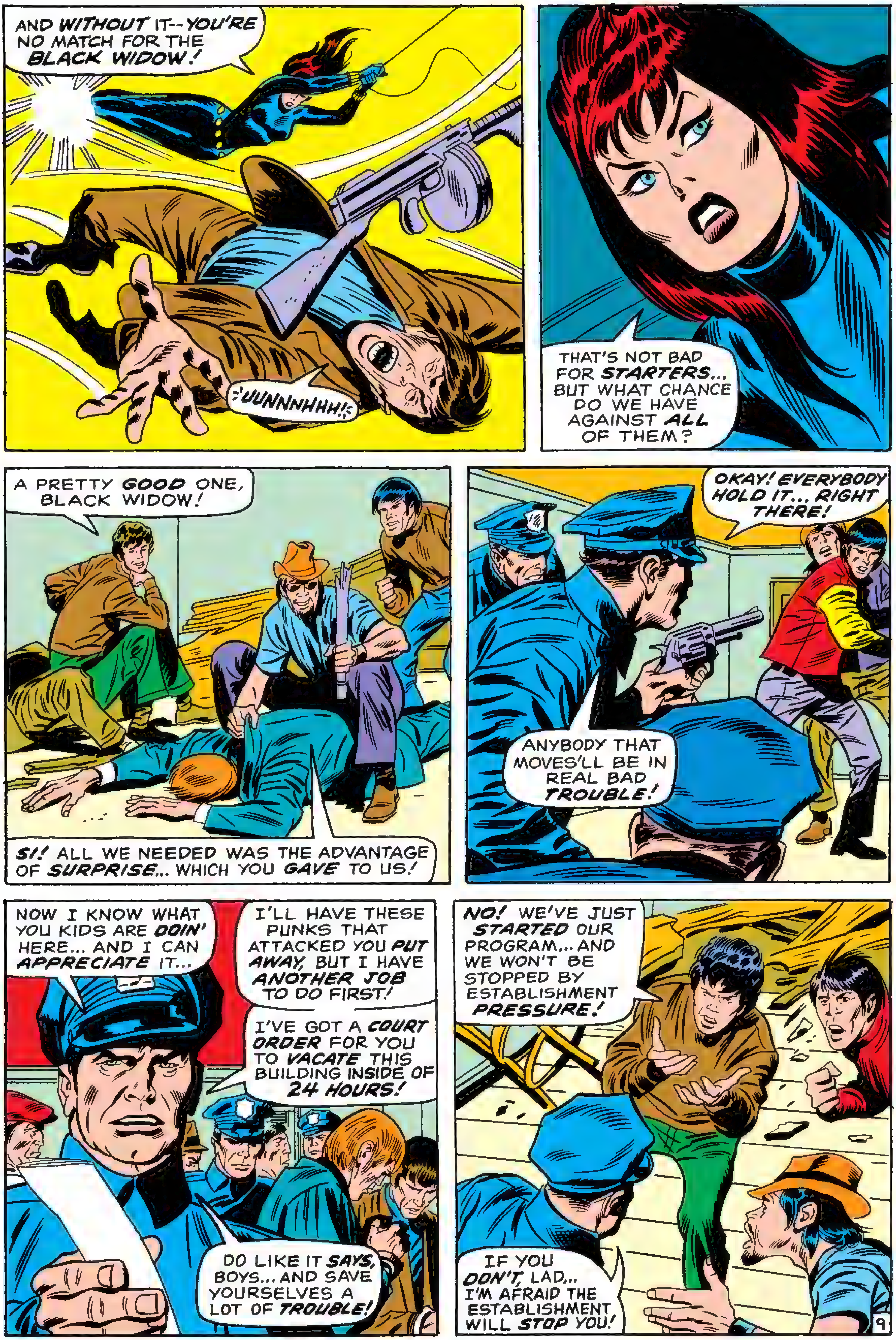

WOW! IT IS THE BLACK WIDOW!
THWAK!

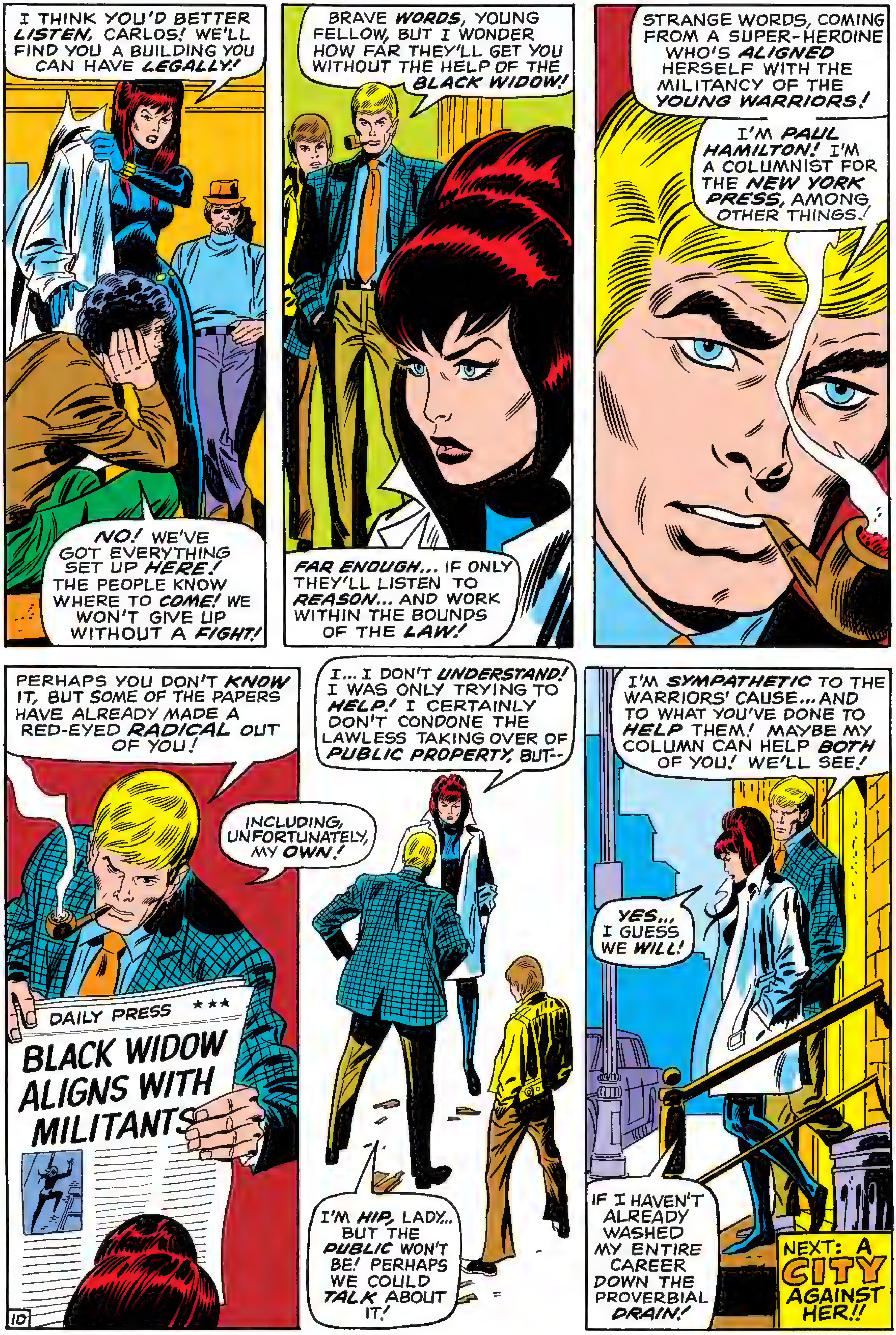

YOU... YOU ARE EVERYTHING I **HOPED**... AND EVEN **MORE!**
FLATTERY WILL GET YOU **EVERYWHERE,** BOY!
I HOPE YOU **MEAN** THAT, BECAUSE I HAVE COME TO ASK YOU A **FAVOR!** I AM A LEADER OF THE **YOUNG WARRIORS...**
...AND IT IS OUR INTENTION TO TAKE OVER A BUILDING IN **SPANISH HARLEM,** WHICH WE WILL USE AS A CENTER FOR **UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN!**
IF THERE IS **TROUBLE,** WE WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO **BACK** US!
IT SOUNDS LIKE A **NOBLE CAUSE,** BUT YOU CAN'T JUST **TAKE** A BUILDING!
OF **COURSE** WE CAN... IF IT IS BEING USED BY THE **BAD...** AND WE CAN USE IT FOR **GOOD!**
PERHAPS, BUT I WON'T MAKE ANY **PROMISES** UNTIL I GET ALL THE **FACTS!**
THEN, THE **NEXT MORNING...**
I TELL YA, BOSS... I DON'T CARE IF THEY **ARE** YOUR PEOPLE, THOSE KIDS CAN CAUSE **TROUBLE!**
VOTE FOR ANTHONY SCAROLA
THEY WANT THIS **BUILDING,** AND IF YOU DON'T GO **TALK...**
STOP **SWEATIN',** SNAKE-EYES! THEY WOULDN'T **DARE** TRY TO BUST IN HERE! THEY OWE ME EVERYTHING THEY **GOT!**


WE OWE YOU NOTHING, PULL-PEDDLER! COOL IT! YOU OWE US--AND WE'RE COLLECTING OUR DEBT--RIGHT NOW!
WE'RE CLAIMING YOUR OFFICES... IN THE NAME OF THE YOUNG WARRIORS!
WHA...?! WHY YOU MISERABLE PUNKS! YOU'D ALL BE STARVING IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME!
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BARGE IN HERE THIS WAY!
IF YOU DON'T LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, I'LL...
YOU'LL WHAT, CANDIDATE?
CALL IN YOUR MUSCLEMEN TO BEAT US UP?!
YEAH... I MEAN, NO! THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO HANDLE YOU PUNKS!
YOU'VE WON THIS ROUND, BUT I'LL BE BACK WITH SOMETHING YOU'LL UNDERSTAND... AND THAT'S A PROMISE FROM ANTHONY SCAROLA!
HELLO... IVAN?! I'VE BEEN READING THE PAPERS... AND I THINK I WANT TO GO TO SPANISH HARLEM!
COULD YOU HAVE MY CAR WAITING... IN ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES?! THANK YOU, IVAN!
IT MUST BE JUST AHEAD, IVAN... WHERE THAT HUGE CROWD IS GATHERING!
PULL IN RIGHT HERE... AND THE BLACK WIDOW WILL TAKE OVER!


THAT'S *RIGHT*, MY FRIENDS... *FREE BREAKFAST* FOR ALL THE CHILDREN!
BRING THE KIDS THIS WAY... COURTESY OF THE *YOUNG WARRIORS!*
JUST LOOK AT THE HUNGRY CHILDREN BEING *FED*... AND TELL ME WE ARE *WRONG!*
FOR THE *FIRST TIME*, OUR PEOPLE ARE EATING *FOOD* INSTEAD OF *CAMPAIGN PROMISES* FROM THE MOUTHS OF SOCIAL CRIMINALS!
I'M IN FAVOR OF WHAT YOU'RE *DOING*, CARLOS! IT'S THE WAY YOU'RE GOING *ABOUT* IT THAT WORRIES ME!
AND YET, WHAT OTHER WAY *COULD* YOU HAVE-- *WHAT--?*
EVERYBODY FREEZE! ANYBODY MAKES A MOVE... AND THEY'VE HAD IT!
THE BOSS THOUGHT ABOUT GOIN' TO *COURT* TO GET RIDD'A YOU CREEPS... BUT HE DECIDED *THIS WAY* MIGHT WORK BETTER!
...SO YOU GOT THIRTY SECONDS TO *CLEAR OUT*... OR WE MAKE *HAMBURGER* OUTTA YOU!


WELL, WHAT'S YER ANSWER?! DO YA LEAVE PEACEFUL-LIKE... OR DO WE CLOBBER YOU?!
ZAT!
WHAT THE...?!
WHO'S THE DAME?!
GET HER!
MY NAME IS MADAME NATASHA...
...BUT YOU CAN CALL ME...THE BLACK WIDOW!
SHE PUTS ON SOME SHOW FOR A BROAD... BUT SHE AIN'T NO MATCH FOR A SUB-MACHINE GUN!


AND WITHOUT IT--YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR THE BLACK WIDOW!
UUNNNHHH!
THAT'S NOT BAD FOR STARTERS... BUT WHAT CHANCE DO WE HAVE AGAINST ALL OF THEM?
A PRETTY GOOD ONE, BLACK WIDOW!
SI! ALL WE NEEDED WAS THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE... WHICH YOU GAVE TO US!
OKAY! EVERYBODY HOLD IT... RIGHT THERE!
ANYBODY THAT MOVES'LL BE IN REAL BAD TROUBLE!
NOW I KNOW WHAT YOU KIDS ARE DOIN' HERE... AND I CAN APPRECIATE IT...
I'LL HAVE THESE PUNKS THAT ATTACKED YOU PUT AWAY, BUT I HAVE ANOTHER JOB TO DO FIRST!
I'VE GOT A COURT ORDER FOR YOU TO VACATE THIS BUILDING INSIDE OF 24 HOURS!
DO LIKE IT SAYS, BOYS... AND SAVE YOURSELVES A LOT OF TROUBLE!
NO! WE'VE JUST STARTED OUR PROGRAM... AND WE WON'T BE STOPPED BY ESTABLISHMENT PRESSURE!
IF YOU DON'T, LAD... I'M AFRAID THE ESTABLISHMENT WILL STOP YOU!


I THINK YOU'D BETTER *LISTEN,* CARLOS! WE'LL FIND YOU A BUILDING YOU CAN HAVE *LEGALLY!*
NO! WE'VE GOT EVERYTHING SET UP *HERE!* THE PEOPLE KNOW WHERE TO *COME!* WE WON'T GIVE UP WITHOUT A *FIGHT!*
BRAVE *WORDS,* YOUNG FELLOW, BUT I WONDER HOW FAR THEY'LL GET YOU WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE *BLACK WIDOW!*
FAR ENOUGH... IF ONLY THEY'LL LISTEN TO *REASON...* AND WORK WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE *LAW!*
STRANGE WORDS, COMING FROM A SUPER-HEROINE WHO'S *ALIGNED* HERSELF WITH THE MILITANCY OF THE *YOUNG WARRIORS!*
I'M *PAUL HAMILTON!* I'M A COLUMNIST FOR THE *NEW YORK PRESS,* AMONG OTHER THINGS!
PERHAPS YOU DON'T *KNOW* IT, BUT SOME OF THE PAPERS HAVE ALREADY MADE A RED-EYED *RADICAL* OUT OF YOU!
DAILY PRESS ★★★
BLACK WIDOW ALIGNS WITH MILITANTS
I... I DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* I WAS ONLY TRYING TO *HELP!* I CERTAINLY DON'T CONDONE THE LAWLESS TAKING OVER OF *PUBLIC PROPERTY,* BUT--
INCLUDING, UNFORTUNATELY, MY *OWN!*
I'M *HIP,* LADY... BUT THE *PUBLIC* WON'T BE! PERHAPS WE COULD *TALK* ABOUT IT!
I'M *SYMPATHETIC* TO THE WARRIORS' CAUSE... AND TO WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO *HELP* THEM! MAYBE MY COLUMN CAN HELP *BOTH* OF YOU! WE'LL SEE!
YES... I GUESS WE *WILL!*
IF I HAVEN'T ALREADY WASHED MY ENTIRE CAREER DOWN THE PROVERBIAL *DRAIN!*
NEXT: A CITY AGAINST HER!!

AMAZING ADVENTURES
15¢
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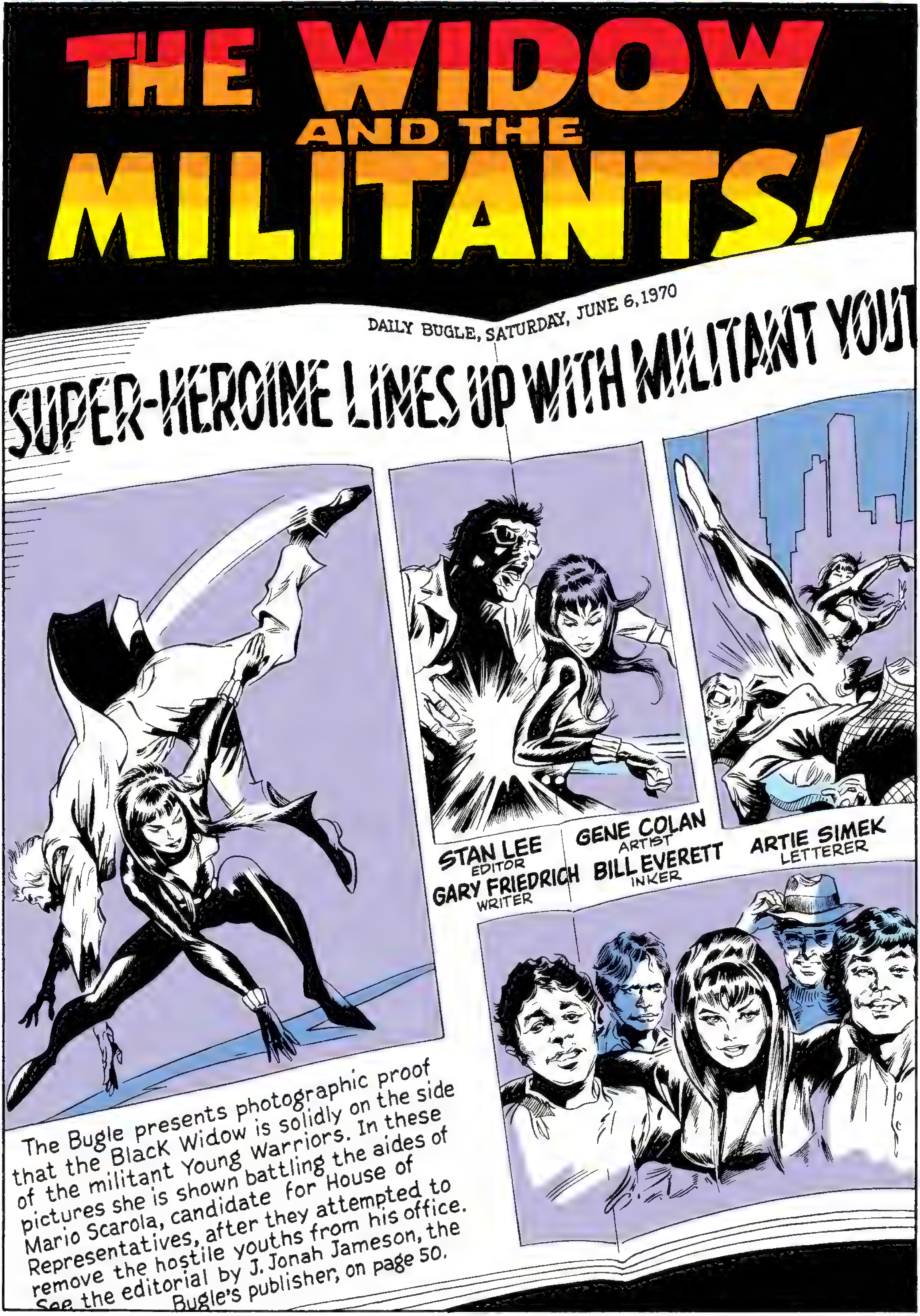
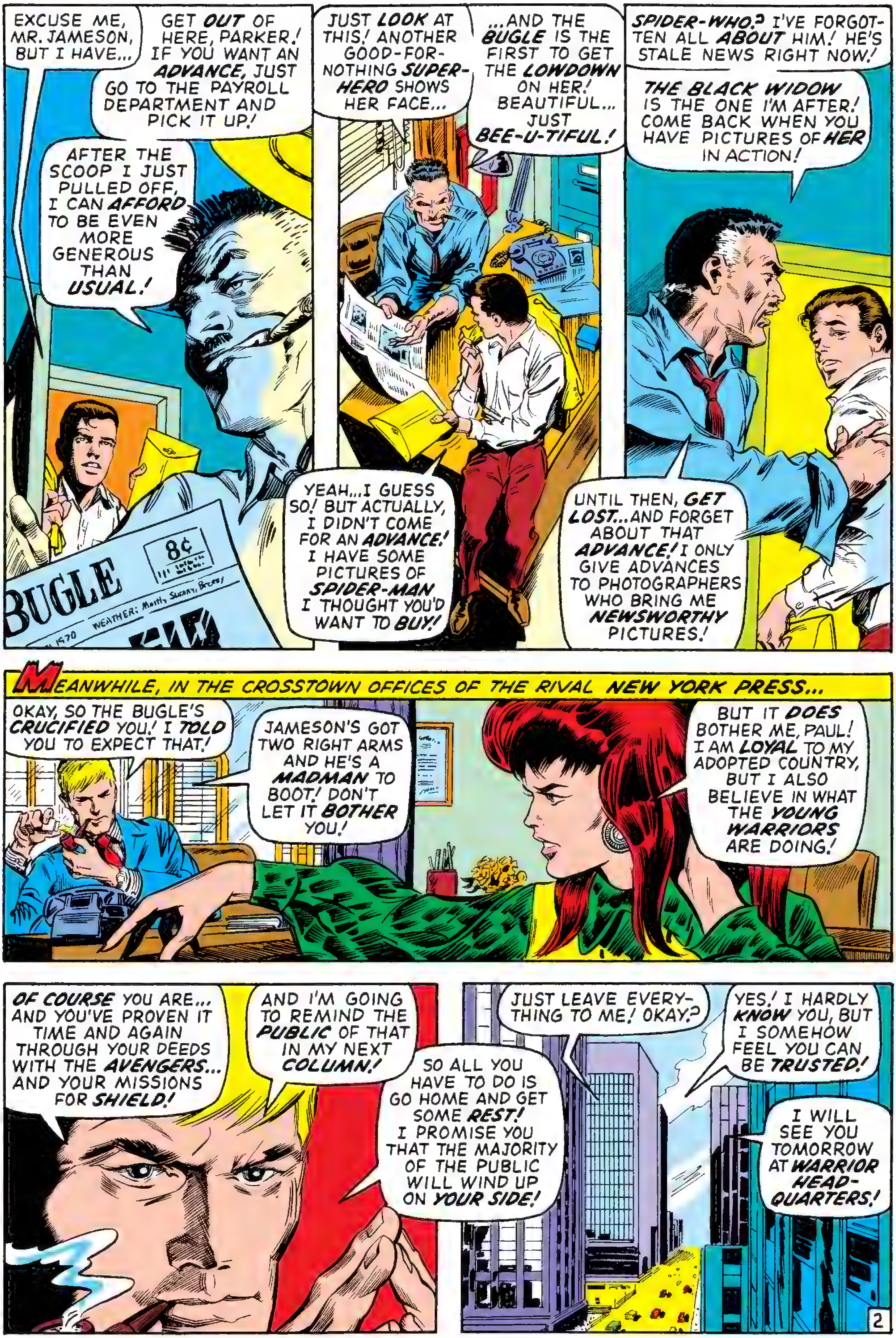
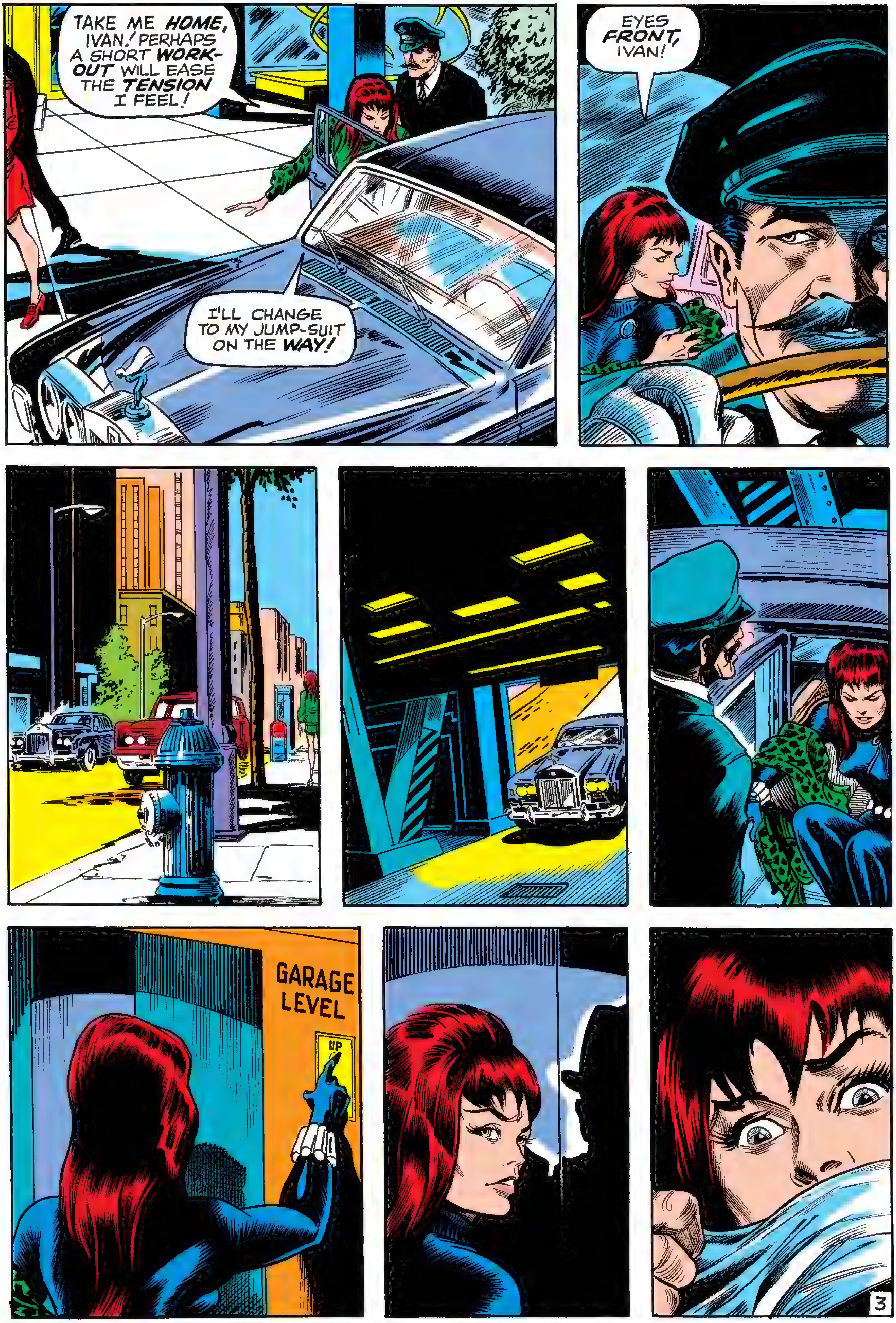
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
AMAZING ADVENTURES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
THE INHUMANS AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
HOW MUCH ACTION CAN YOU TAKE?
THE BATTLE OF DOOM! INHUMANS VS. THE MANDARIN!
DEATH TO THE BLACK WIDOW!
TWO MORE REASONS WHY MIGHTY MARVEL IS ON THE MOVE AGAIN!

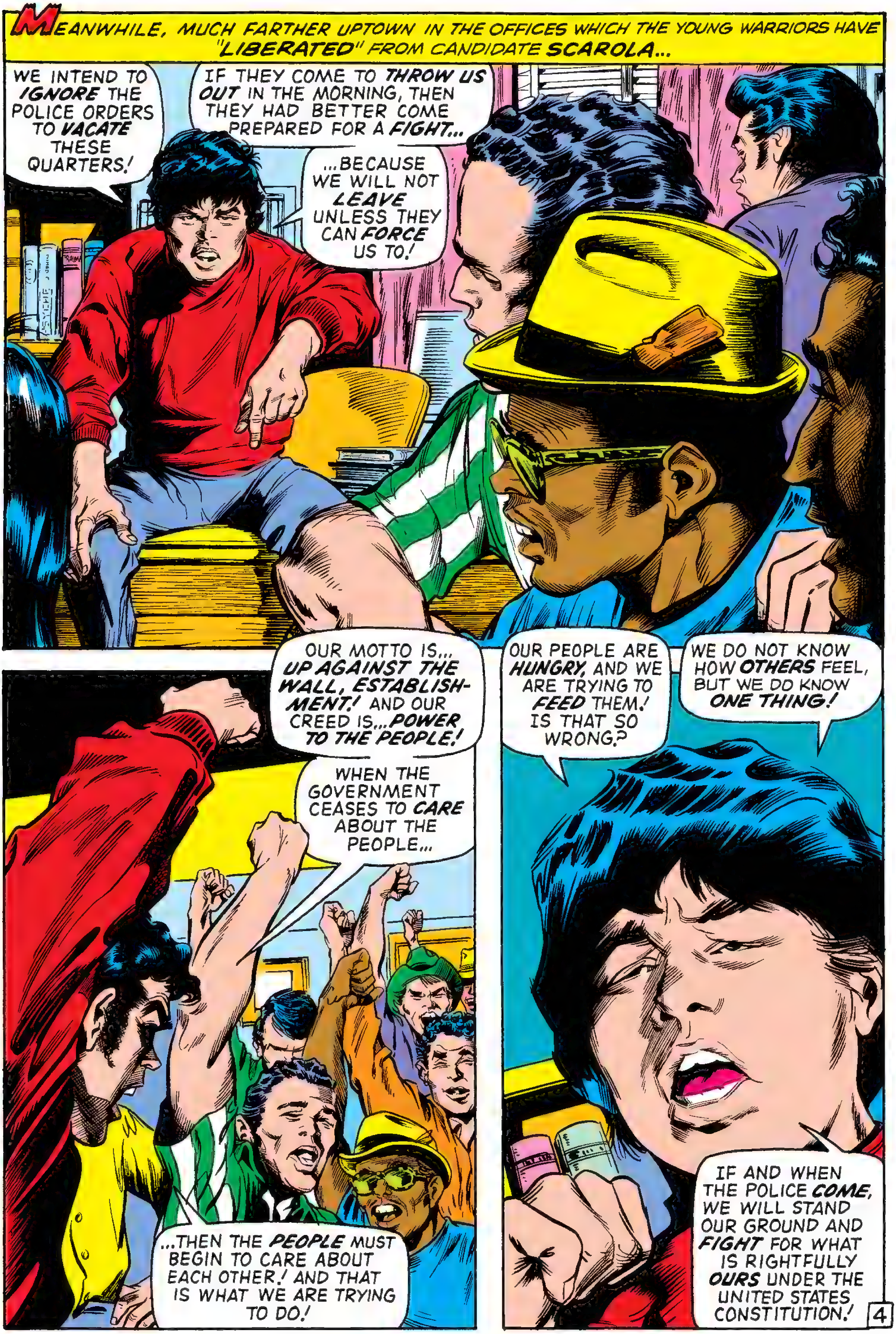
THE BLACK WIDOW!™

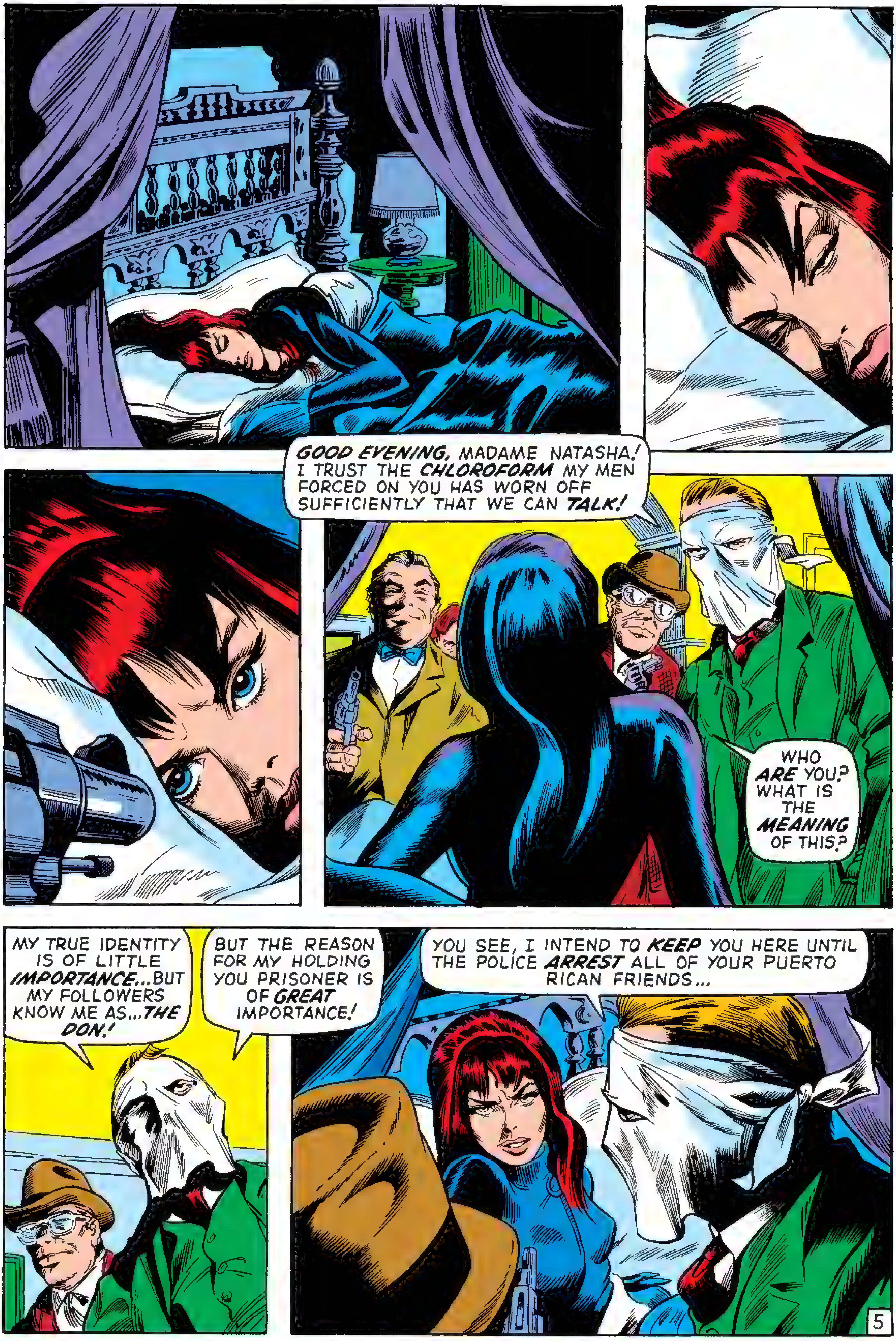
THE WIDOW AND THE MILITANTS!

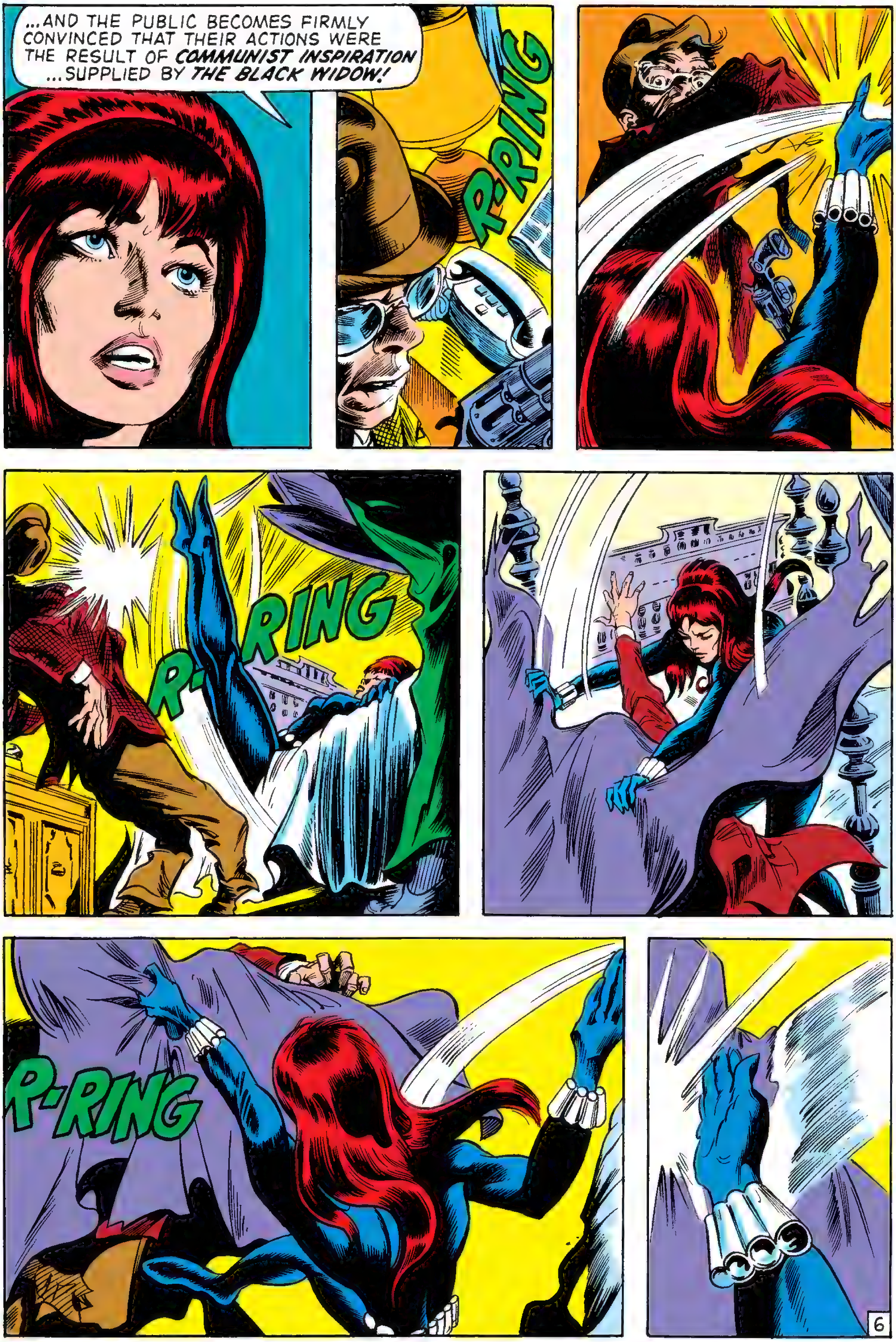

DAILY BUGLE, SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1970
SUPER-HEROINE LINES UP WITH MILITANT YOUT
STAN LEE EDITOR
GARY FRIEDRICH WRITER
GENE COLAN ARTIST
BILL EVERETT INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER
The Bugle presents photographic proof that the Black Widow is solidly on the side of the militant Young Warriors. In these pictures she is shown battling the aides of Mario Scarola, candidate for House of Representatives, after they attempted to remove the hostile youths from his office. See the editorial by J. Jonah Jameson, the Bugle's publisher, on page 50.

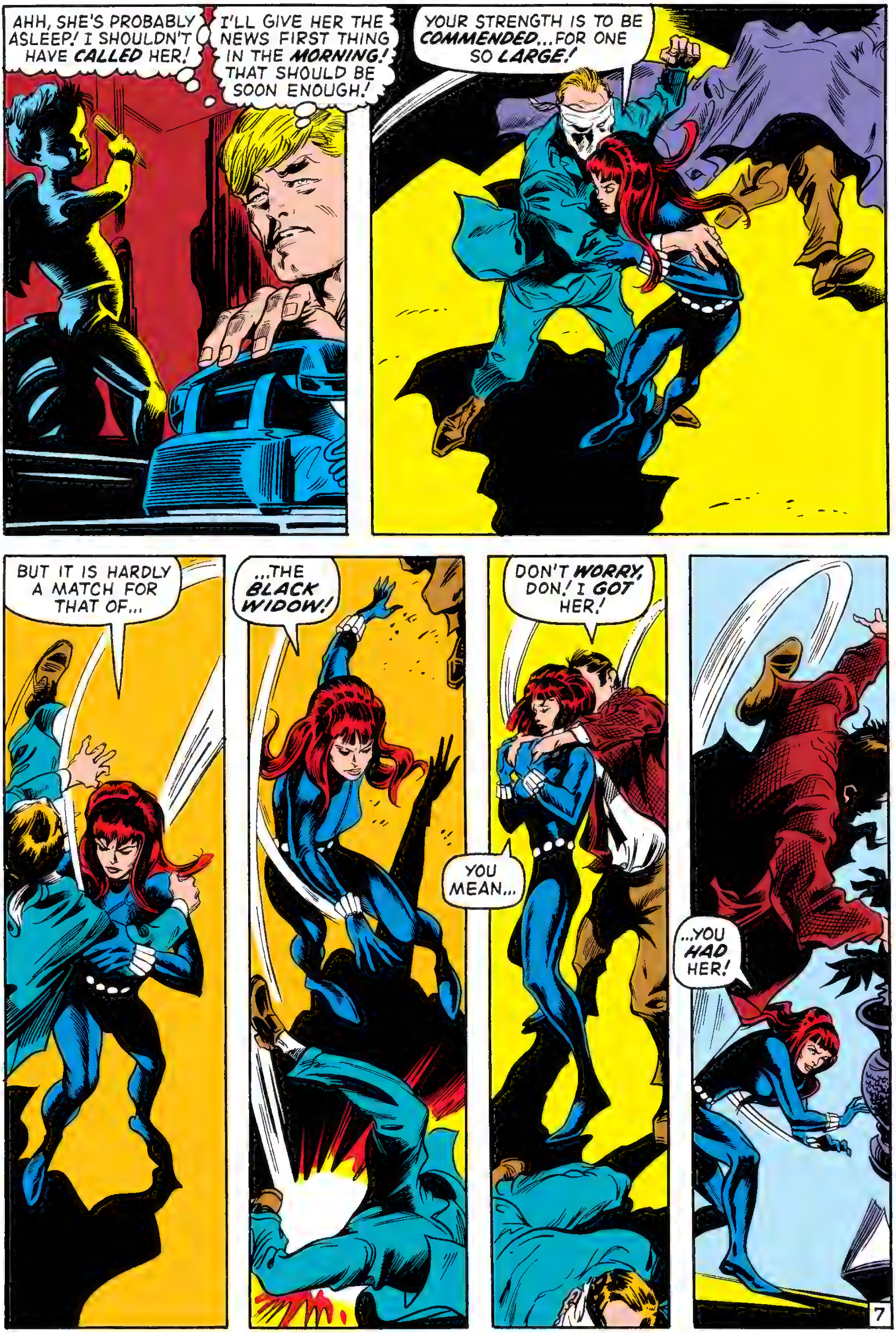

EXCUSE ME, MR. JAMESON, BUT I HAVE...
GET OUT OF HERE, PARKER! IF YOU WANT AN ADVANCE, JUST GO TO THE PAYROLL DEPARTMENT AND PICK IT UP!
AFTER THE SCOOP I JUST PULLED OFF, I CAN AFFORD TO BE EVEN MORE GENEROUS THAN USUAL!
BUGLE
8¢
WEATHER: Mostly Sunny, Breezy
JUST LOOK AT THIS! ANOTHER GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SUPER-HERO SHOWS HER FACE...
...AND THE BUGLE IS THE FIRST TO GET THE LOWDOWN ON HER! BEAUTIFUL... JUST BEE-U-TIFUL!
YEAH...I GUESS SO! BUT ACTUALLY, I DIDN'T COME FOR AN ADVANCE! I HAVE SOME PICTURES OF SPIDER-MAN I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO BUY!
SPIDER-WHO? I'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT HIM! HE'S STALE NEWS RIGHT NOW!
THE BLACK WIDOW IS THE ONE I'M AFTER! COME BACK WHEN YOU HAVE PICTURES OF HER IN ACTION!
UNTIL THEN, GET LOST...AND FORGET ABOUT THAT ADVANCE! I ONLY GIVE ADVANCES TO PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO BRING ME NEWSWORTHY PICTURES!
MEANWHILE, IN THE CROSSTOWN OFFICES OF THE RIVAL NEW YORK PRESS...
OKAY, SO THE BUGLE'S CRUCIFIED YOU! I TOLD YOU TO EXPECT THAT!
JAMESON'S GOT TWO RIGHT ARMS AND HE'S A MADMAN TO BOOT! DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU!
BUT IT DOES BOTHER ME, PAUL! I AM LOYAL TO MY ADOPTED COUNTRY, BUT I ALSO BELIEVE IN WHAT THE YOUNG WARRIORS ARE DOING!
OF COURSE YOU ARE... AND YOU'VE PROVEN IT TIME AND AGAIN THROUGH YOUR DEEDS WITH THE AVENGERS... AND YOUR MISSIONS FOR SHIELD!
AND I'M GOING TO REMIND THE PUBLIC OF THAT IN MY NEXT COLUMN!
SO ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS GO HOME AND GET SOME REST! I PROMISE YOU THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC WILL WIND UP ON YOUR SIDE!
JUST LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME! OKAY?
YES! I HARDLY KNOW YOU, BUT I SOMEHOW FEEL YOU CAN BE TRUSTED!
I WILL SEE YOU TOMORROW AT WARRIOR HEAD-QUARTERS!

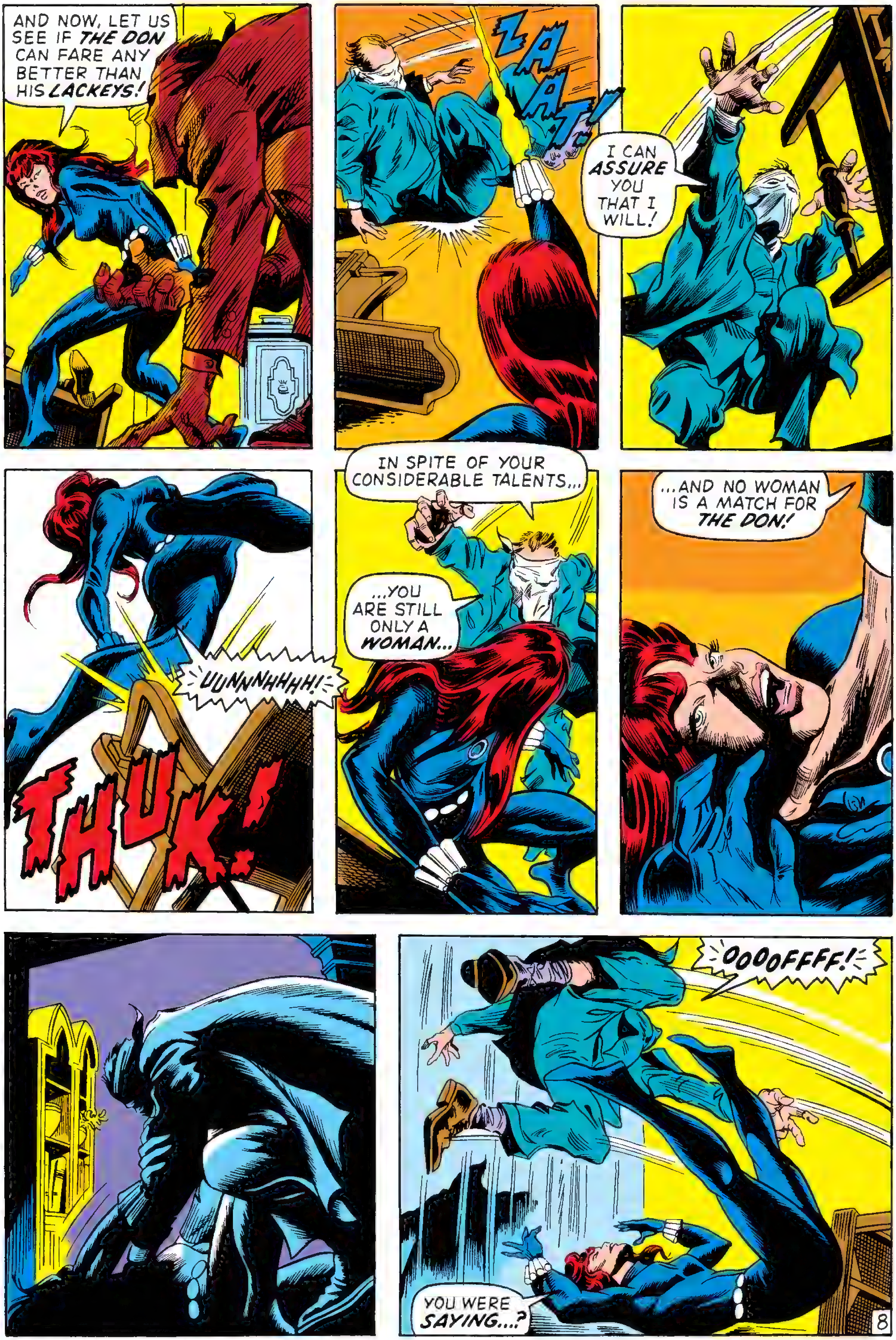

TAKE ME *HOME*, IVAN! PERHAPS A SHORT *WORK-OUT* WILL EASE THE *TENSION* I FEEL!
I'LL CHANGE TO MY JUMP-SUIT ON THE *WAY!*
EYES *FRONT*, IVAN!
GARAGE LEVEL
UP

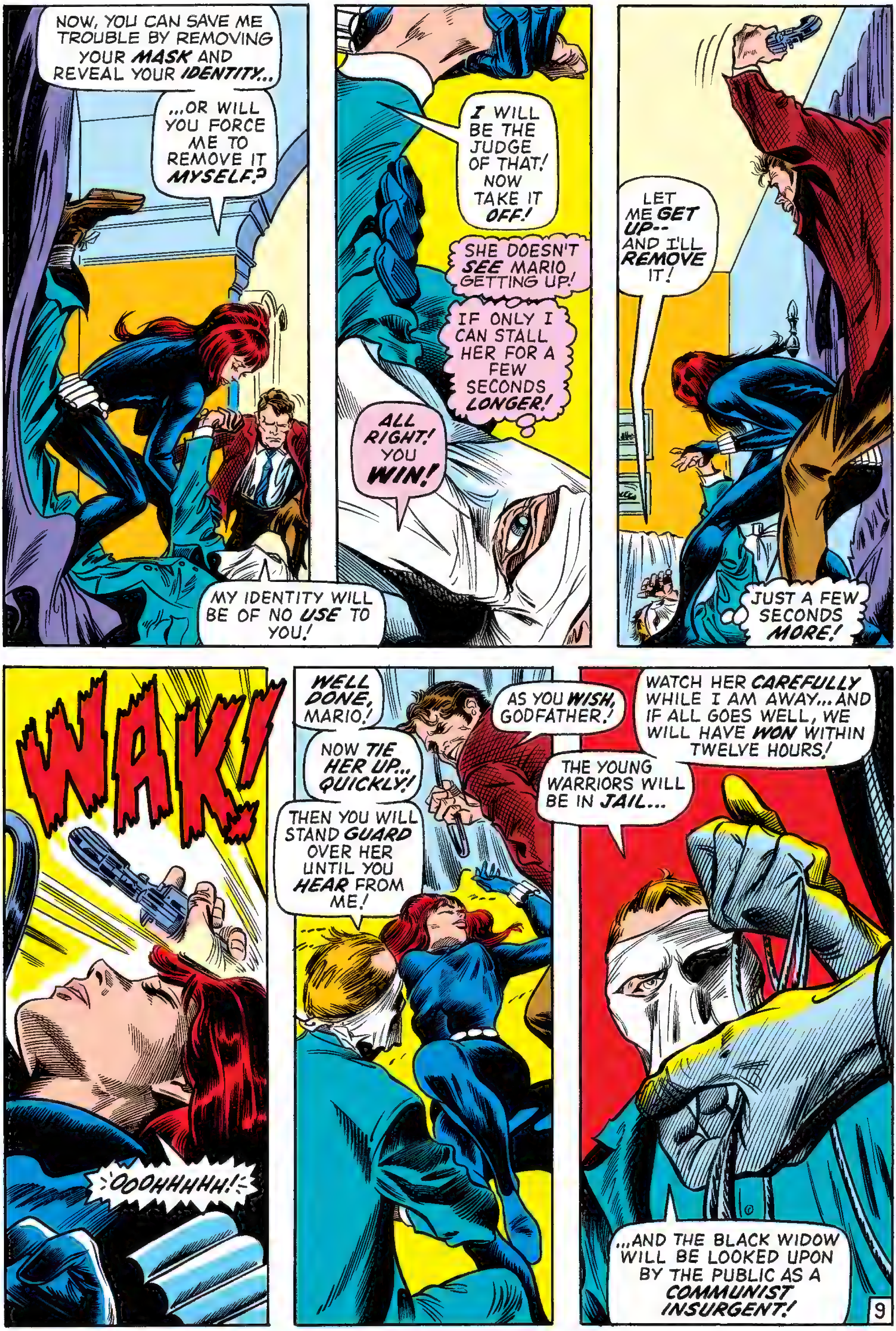

MEANWHILE, MUCH FARTHER UPTOWN IN THE OFFICES WHICH THE YOUNG WARRIORS HAVE "LIBERATED" FROM CANDIDATE SCAROLA...
WE INTEND TO IGNORE THE POLICE ORDERS TO VACATE THESE QUARTERS!
IF THEY COME TO THROW US OUT IN THE MORNING, THEN THEY HAD BETTER COME PREPARED FOR A FIGHT...
...BECAUSE WE WILL NOT LEAVE UNLESS THEY CAN FORCE US TO!
OUR MOTTO IS... UP AGAINST THE WALL, ESTABLISHMENT! AND OUR CREED IS... POWER TO THE PEOPLE!
WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CEASES TO CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE...
...THEN THE PEOPLE MUST BEGIN TO CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER! AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO!
OUR PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY, AND WE ARE TRYING TO FEED THEM! IS THAT SO WRONG?
WE DO NOT KNOW HOW OTHERS FEEL, BUT WE DO KNOW ONE THING!
IF AND WHEN THE POLICE COME, WE WILL STAND OUR GROUND AND FIGHT FOR WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY OURS UNDER THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION!

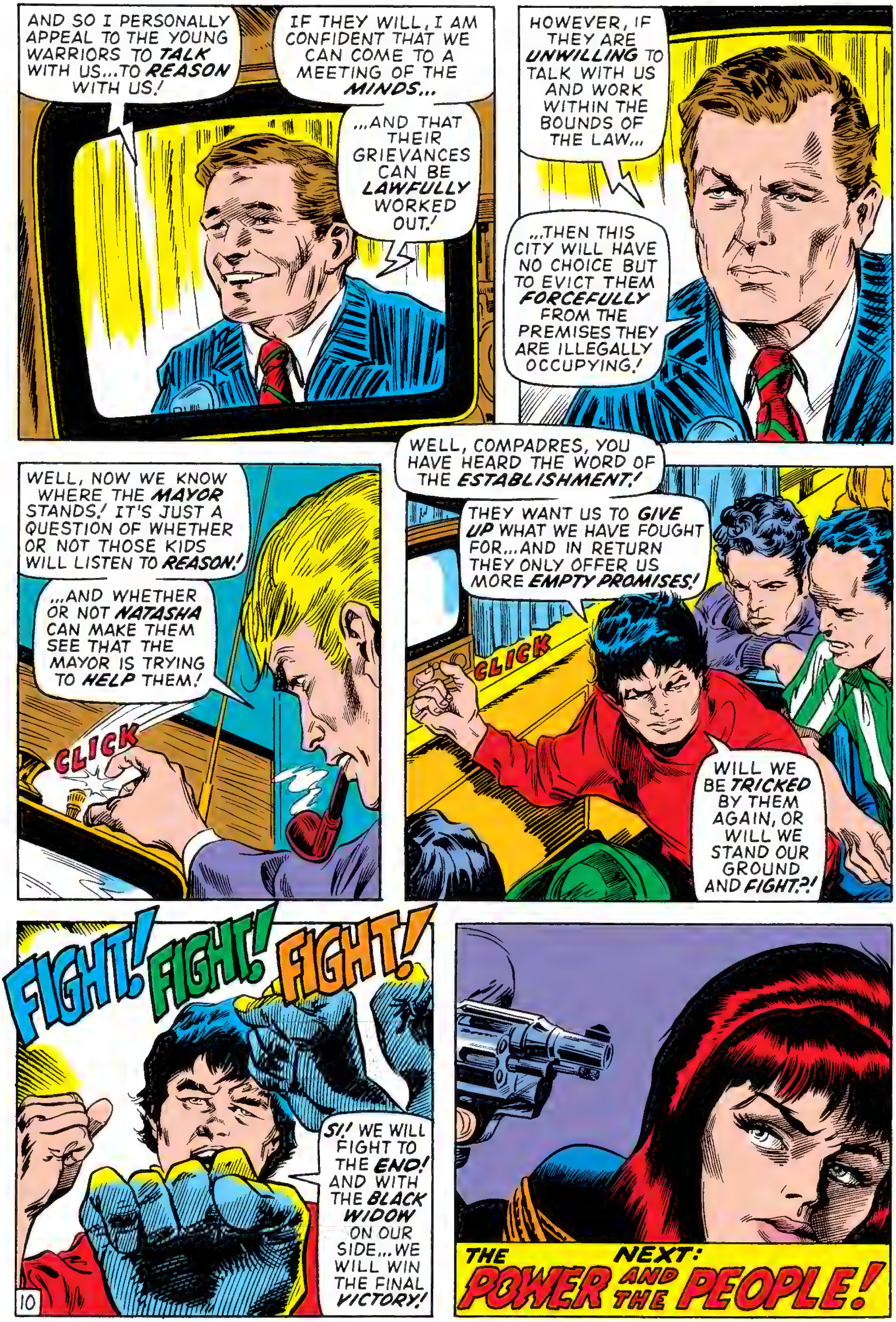

GOOD EVENING, MADAME NATASHA! I TRUST THE CHLOROFORM MY MEN FORCED ON YOU HAS WORN OFF SUFFICIENTLY THAT WE CAN TALK!
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
MY TRUE IDENTITY IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE...BUT MY FOLLOWERS KNOW ME AS...THE DON!
BUT THE REASON FOR MY HOLDING YOU PRISONER IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE!
YOU SEE, I INTEND TO KEEP YOU HERE UNTIL THE POLICE ARREST ALL OF YOUR PUERTO RICAN FRIENDS...


...AND THE PUBLIC BECOMES FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THEIR ACTIONS WERE THE RESULT OF *COMMUNIST INSPIRATION* ...SUPPLIED BY *THE BLACK WIDOW!*
R-RING
R-RING
R-RING


AHH, SHE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP! I SHOULDN'T HAVE *CALLED* HER!
I'LL GIVE HER THE NEWS FIRST THING IN THE *MORNING!* THAT SHOULD BE SOON ENOUGH!
YOUR STRENGTH IS TO BE *COMMENDED*...FOR ONE SO *LARGE!*
BUT IT IS HARDLY A MATCH FOR THAT OF...
...THE *BLACK WIDOW!*
DON'T *WORRY,* DON! I *GOT* HER!
YOU MEAN...
...YOU *HAD* HER!

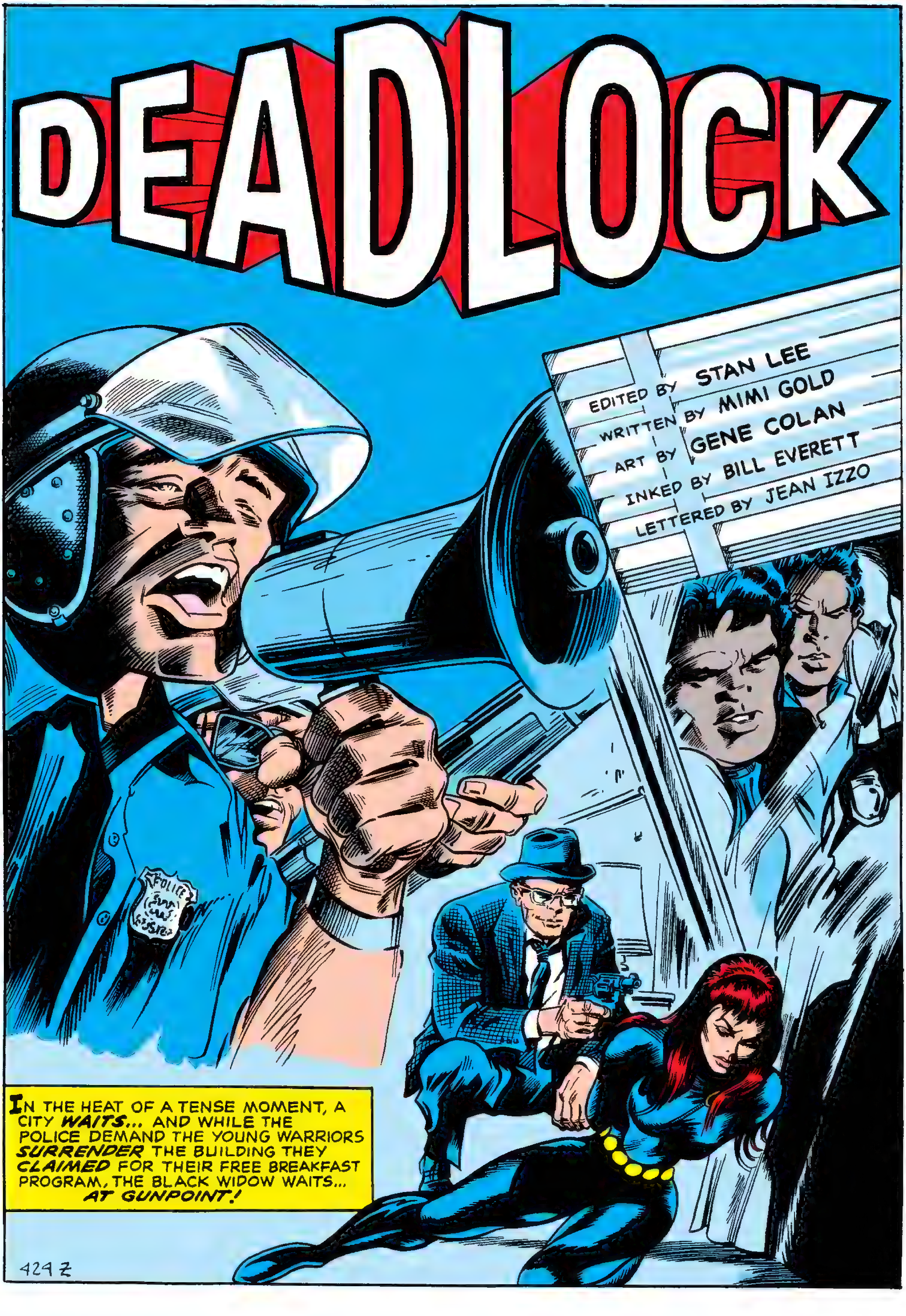

AND NOW, LET US SEE IF *THE DON* CAN FARE ANY BETTER THAN HIS *LACKEYS!*
ZAAT!
I CAN *ASSURE* YOU THAT I WILL!
UUNNNHHHH!
THUK!
IN SPITE OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE TALENTS...
...YOU ARE STILL ONLY A *WOMAN...*
...AND NO WOMAN IS A MATCH FOR *THE DON!*
OOOOFFFF!
YOU WERE *SAYING...?*

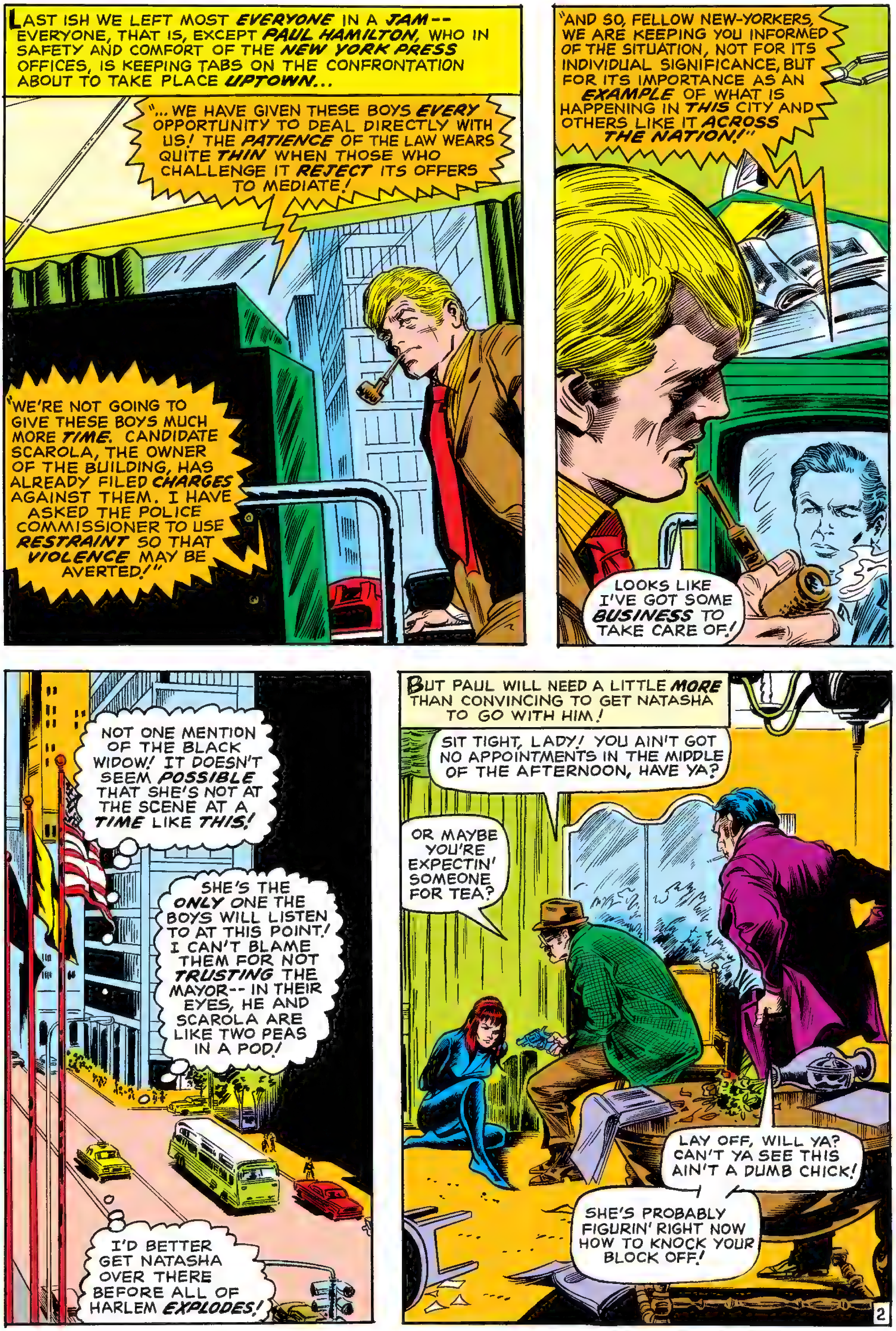

NOW, YOU CAN SAVE ME TROUBLE BY REMOVING YOUR **MASK** AND REVEAL YOUR ***IDENTITY***...
...OR WILL YOU FORCE ME TO REMOVE IT ***MYSELF?***
MY IDENTITY WILL BE OF NO ***USE*** TO YOU!
I WILL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT! NOW TAKE IT ***OFF!***
SHE DOESN'T ***SEE*** MARIO GETTING UP!
IF ONLY I CAN STALL HER FOR A FEW SECONDS ***LONGER!***
ALL RIGHT! YOU ***WIN!***
LET ME ***GET UP--*** AND I'LL ***REMOVE*** IT!
JUST A FEW SECONDS ***MORE!***
WAK!
OOOHHHHH!
WELL DONE, MARIO!
NOW ***TIE HER UP... QUICKLY!***
THEN YOU WILL STAND ***GUARD*** OVER HER UNTIL YOU ***HEAR*** FROM ME!
AS YOU ***WISH,*** GODFATHER!
WATCH HER ***CAREFULLY*** WHILE I AM AWAY... AND IF ALL GOES WELL, WE WILL HAVE ***WON*** WITHIN TWELVE HOURS!
THE YOUNG WARRIORS WILL BE IN ***JAIL...***
...AND THE BLACK WIDOW WILL BE LOOKED UPON BY THE PUBLIC AS A ***COMMUNIST INSURGENT!***

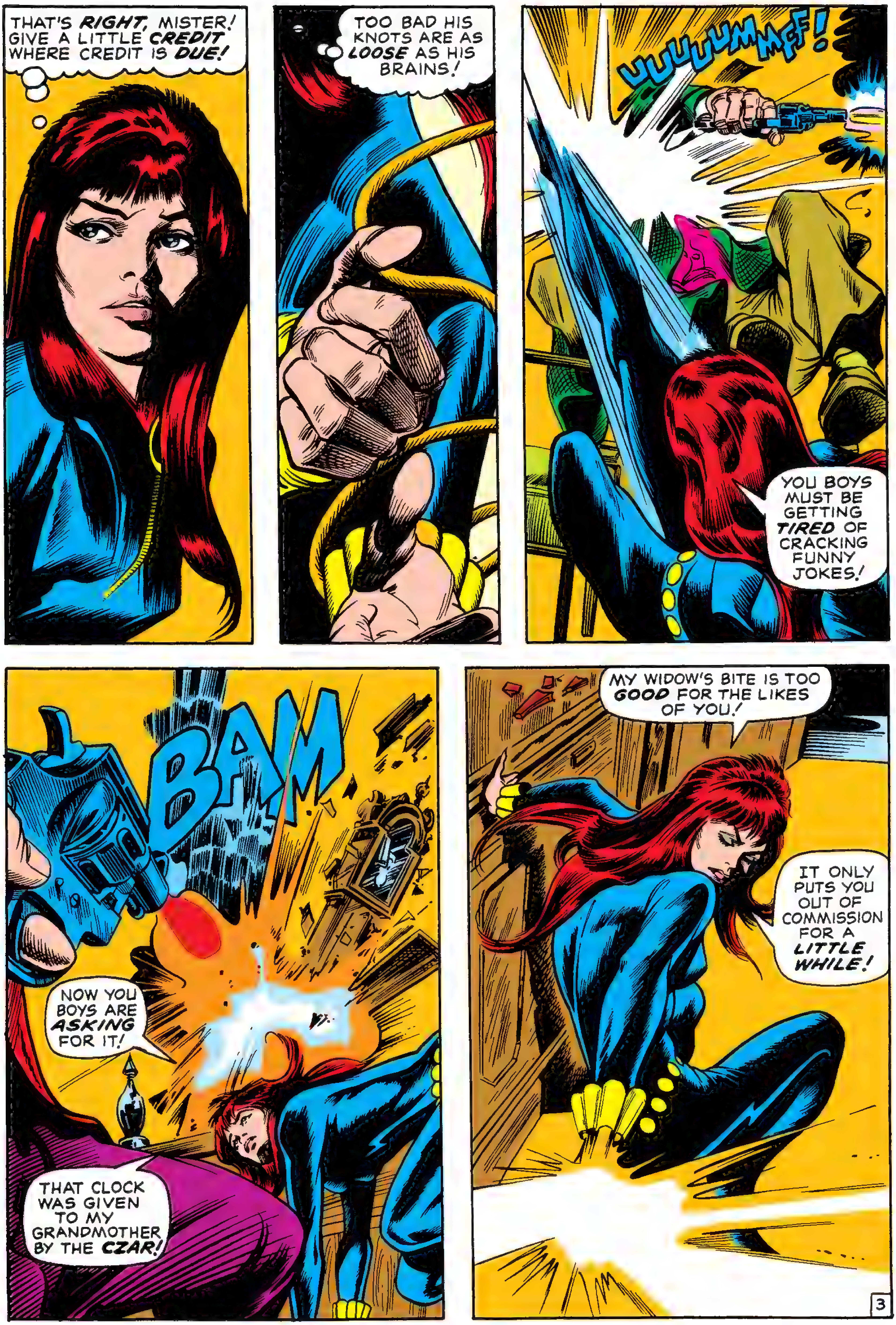

AND SO I PERSONALLY APPEAL TO THE YOUNG WARRIORS TO **TALK** WITH US...TO **REASON** WITH US!
IF THEY WILL, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN COME TO A MEETING OF THE **MINDS...**
...AND THAT THEIR GRIEVANCES CAN BE **LAWFULLY** WORKED OUT!
HOWEVER, IF THEY ARE **UNWILLING** TO TALK WITH US AND WORK WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE LAW...
...THEN THIS CITY WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EVICT THEM **FORCEFULLY** FROM THE PREMISES THEY ARE ILLEGALLY OCCUPYING!
WELL, NOW WE KNOW WHERE THE **MAYOR** STANDS! IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THOSE KIDS WILL LISTEN TO **REASON!**
...AND WHETHER OR NOT **NATASHA** CAN MAKE THEM SEE THAT THE MAYOR IS TRYING TO **HELP** THEM!
CLICK
WELL, COMPADRES, YOU HAVE HEARD THE WORD OF THE **ESTABLISHMENT!**
THEY WANT US TO **GIVE UP** WHAT WE HAVE FOUGHT FOR...AND IN RETURN THEY ONLY OFFER US MORE **EMPTY PROMISES!**
CLICK
WILL WE BE **TRICKED** BY THEM AGAIN, OR WILL WE STAND OUR GROUND AND **FIGHT?!**
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!
SI! WE WILL FIGHT TO THE **END!** AND WITH THE **BLACK WIDOW** ON OUR SIDE...WE WILL WIN THE FINAL **VICTORY!**
10
THE NEXT: POWER AND THE PEOPLE!

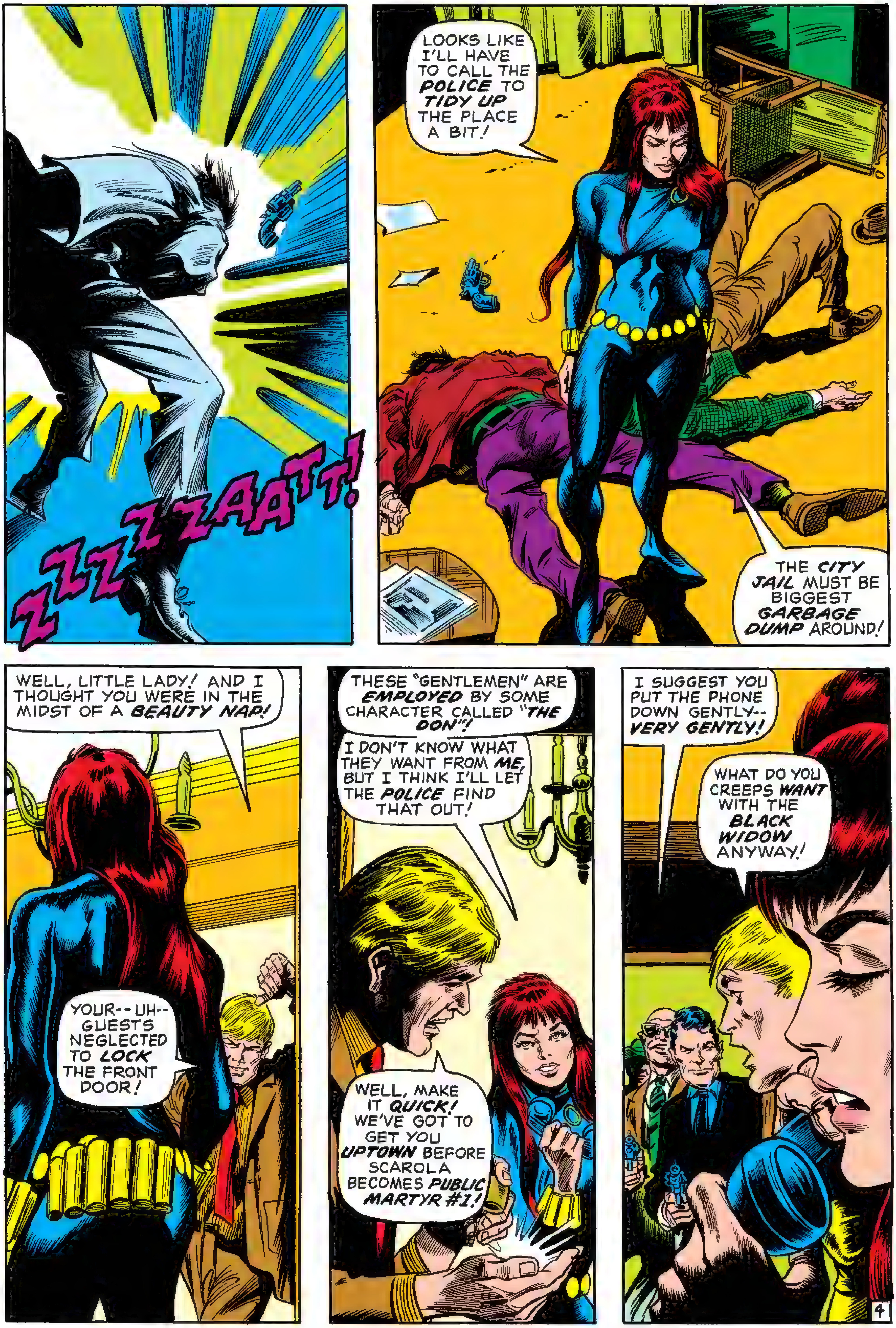
AMAZING ADVENTURES
15¢
4
JAN
AMAZING ADVENTURES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
P.D.
P.D.
TWO MORE MARVEL ACTION BLOCK-BUSTERS!
THE NAME OF THE GAME IS--
DEADLOCK!
WITH THESE RINGS--I THEE KILL!!

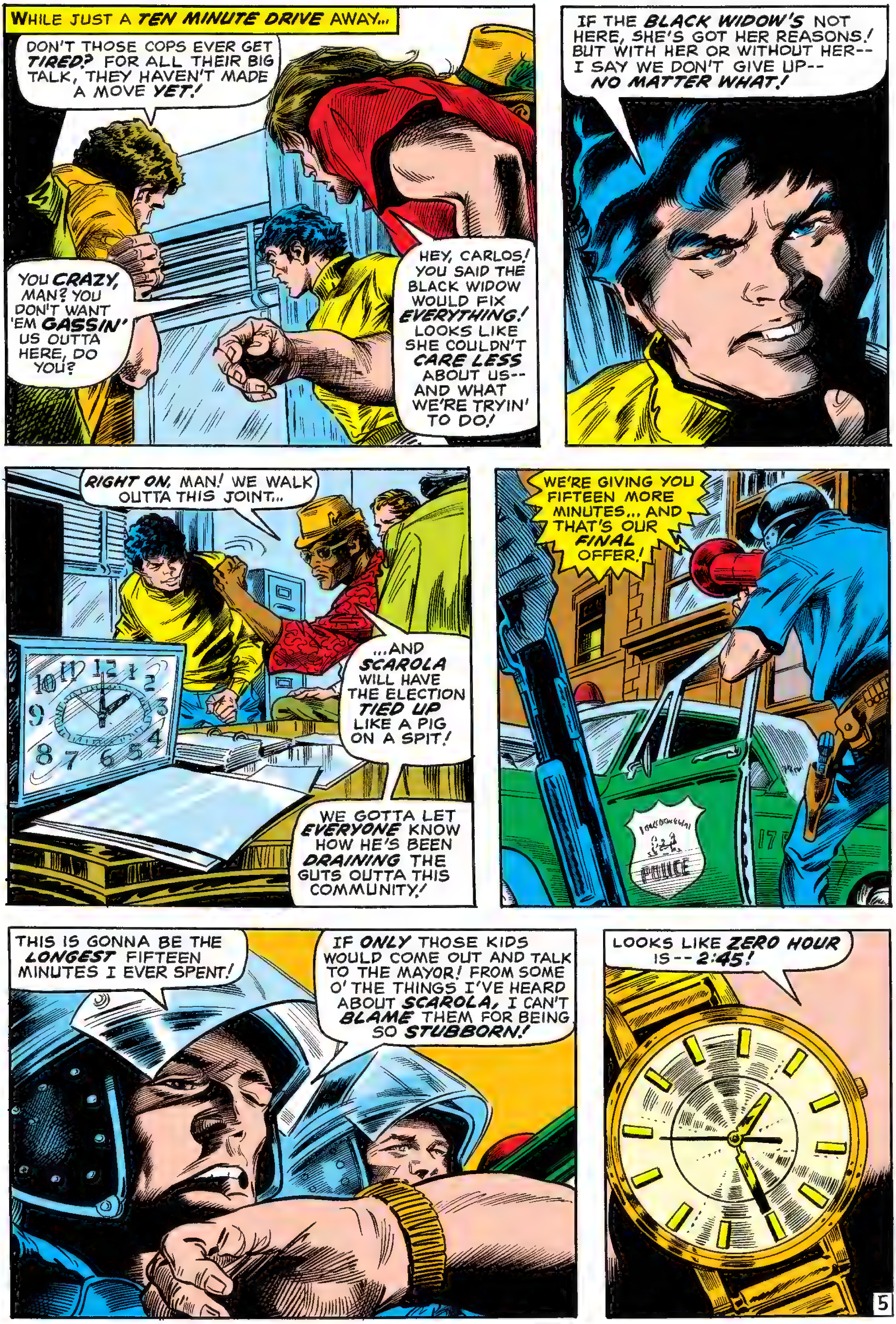
THE BLACK WIDOW!™

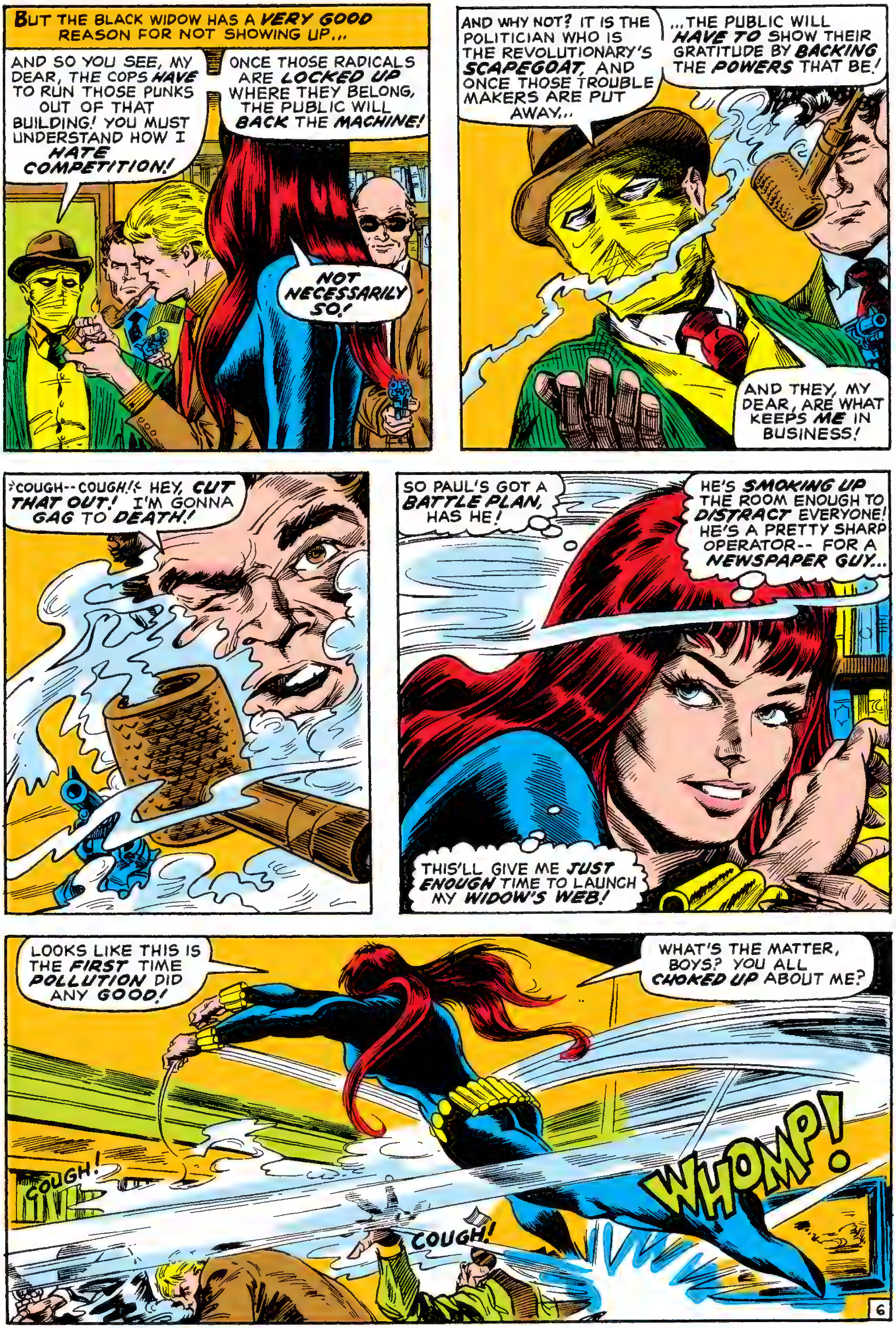

DEADLOCK
EDITED BY STAN LEE
WRITTEN BY MIMI GOLD
ART BY GENE COLAN
INKED BY BILL EVERETT
LETTERED BY JEAN IZZO
POLICE
IN THE HEAT OF A TENSE MOMENT, A CITY *WAITS...* AND WHILE THE POLICE DEMAND THE YOUNG WARRIORS *SURRENDER* THE BUILDING THEY *CLAIMED* FOR THEIR FREE BREAKFAST PROGRAM, THE BLACK WIDOW WAITS... *AT GUNPOINT!*
429 Z

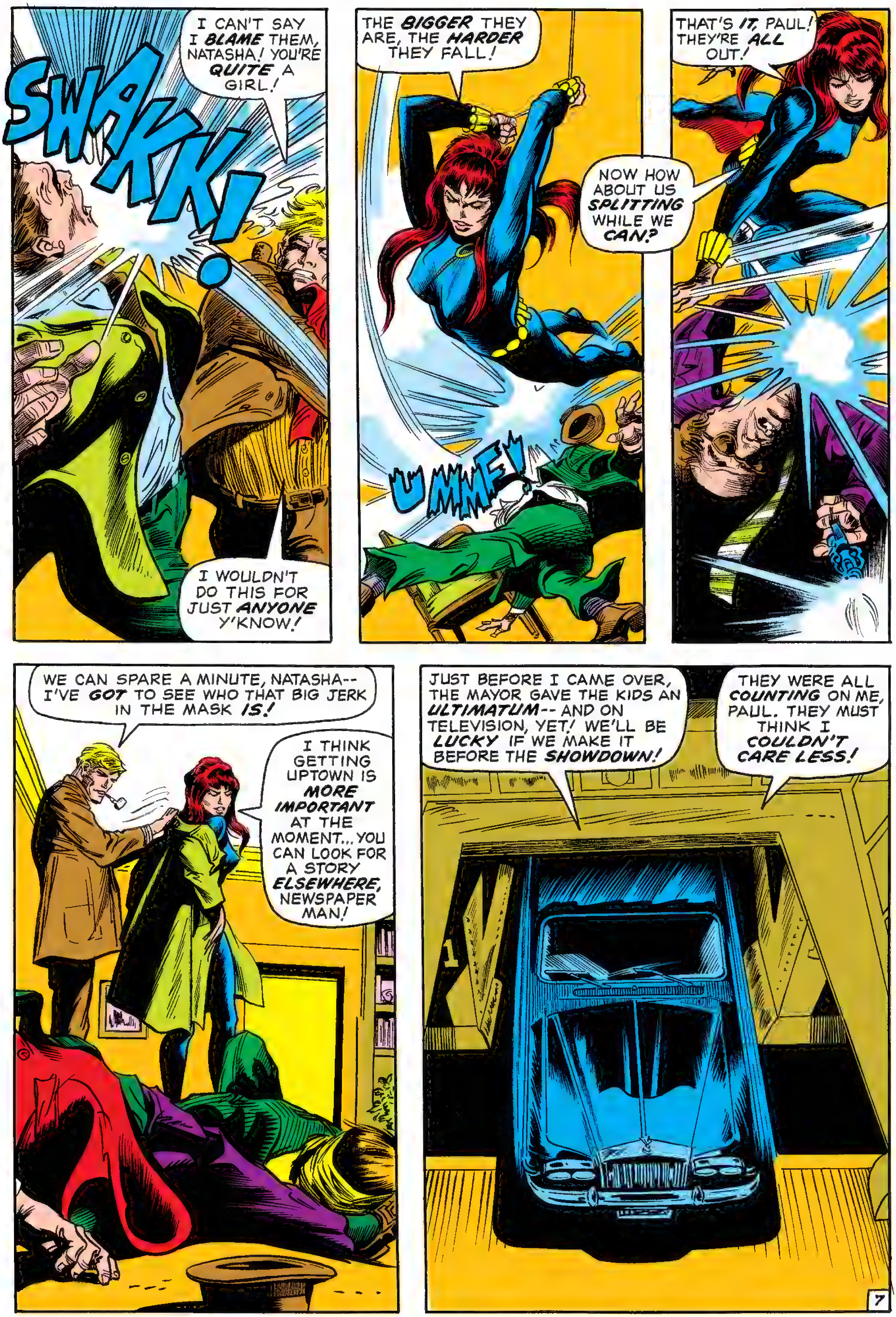

LAST ISH WE LEFT MOST EVERYONE IN A JAM-- EVERYONE, THAT IS, EXCEPT PAUL HAMILTON, WHO IN SAFETY AND COMFORT OF THE NEW YORK PRESS OFFICES, IS KEEPING TABS ON THE CONFRONTATION ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE UPTOWN...
"...WE HAVE GIVEN THESE BOYS EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH US! THE PATIENCE OF THE LAW WEARS QUITE THIN WHEN THOSE WHO CHALLENGE IT REJECT ITS OFFERS TO MEDIATE!
"WE'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE THESE BOYS MUCH MORE TIME. CANDIDATE SCAROLA, THE OWNER OF THE BUILDING, HAS ALREADY FILED CHARGES AGAINST THEM. I HAVE ASKED THE POLICE COMMISSIONER TO USE RESTRAINT SO THAT VIOLENCE MAY BE AVERTED!"
"AND SO, FELLOW NEW-YORKERS, WE ARE KEEPING YOU INFORMED OF THE SITUATION, NOT FOR ITS INDIVIDUAL SIGNIFICANCE, BUT FOR ITS IMPORTANCE AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS CITY AND OTHERS LIKE IT ACROSS THE NATION!"
LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF!
NOT ONE MENTION OF THE BLACK WIDOW! IT DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE THAT SHE'S NOT AT THE SCENE AT A TIME LIKE THIS!
SHE'S THE ONLY ONE THE BOYS WILL LISTEN TO AT THIS POINT! I CAN'T BLAME THEM FOR NOT TRUSTING THE MAYOR-- IN THEIR EYES, HE AND SCAROLA ARE LIKE TWO PEAS IN A POD!
I'D BETTER GET NATASHA OVER THERE BEFORE ALL OF HARLEM EXPLODES!
BUT PAUL WILL NEED A LITTLE MORE THAN CONVINCING TO GET NATASHA TO GO WITH HIM!
SIT TIGHT, LADY! YOU AIN'T GOT NO APPOINTMENTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AFTERNOON, HAVE YA?
OR MAYBE YOU'RE EXPECTIN' SOMEONE FOR TEA?
LAY OFF, WILL YA? CAN'T YA SEE THIS AIN'T A DUMB CHICK!
SHE'S PROBABLY FIGURIN' RIGHT NOW HOW TO KNOCK YOUR BLOCK OFF!

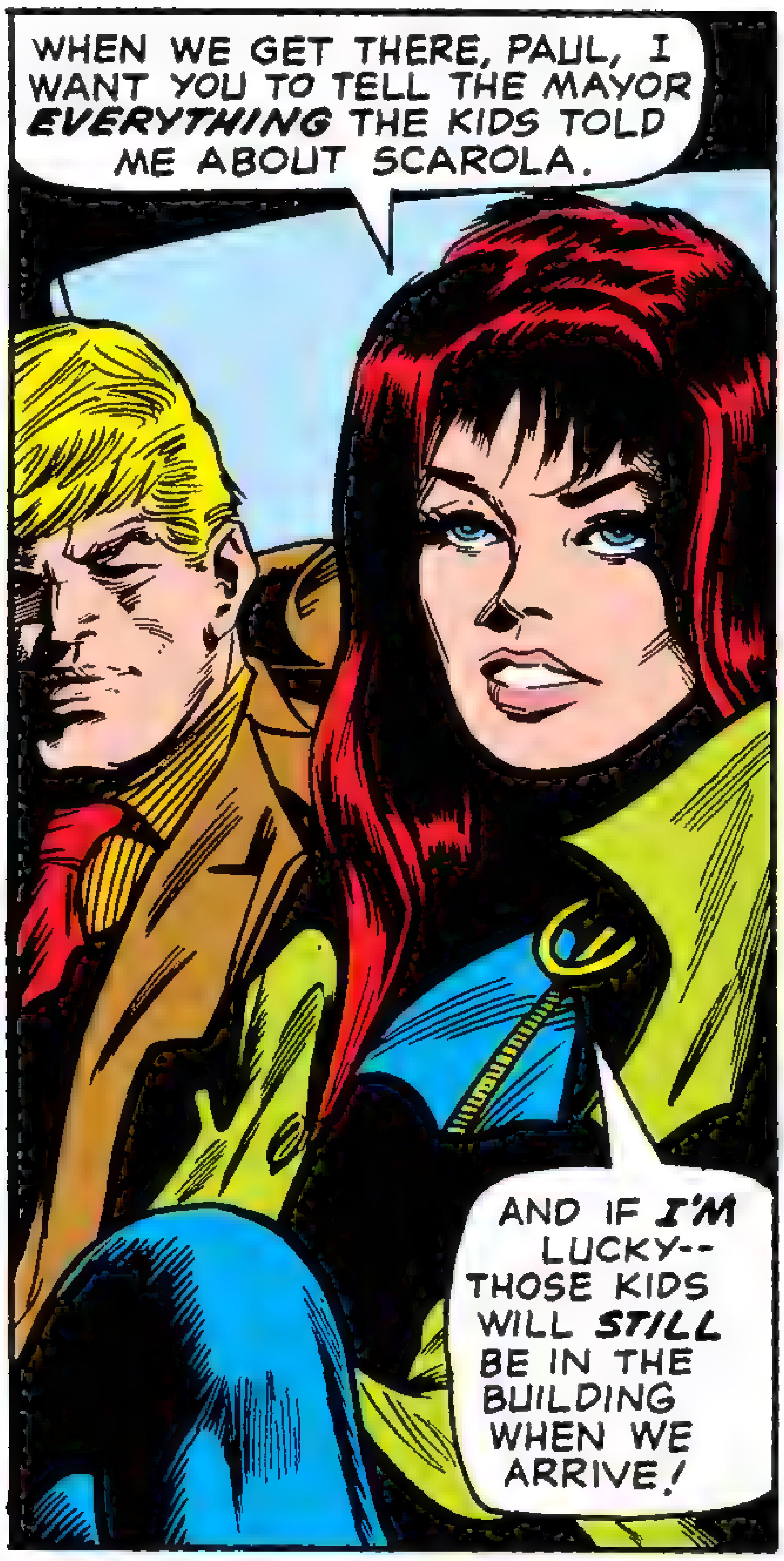

THAT'S *RIGHT,* MISTER! GIVE A LITTLE *CREDIT* WHERE CREDIT IS *DUE!*
TOO BAD HIS KNOTS ARE AS *LOOSE* AS HIS BRAINS!
UUUUUMMFF!
YOU BOYS MUST BE GETTING *TIRED* OF CRACKING FUNNY JOKES!
BAM
NOW YOU BOYS ARE *ASKING* FOR IT!
THAT CLOCK WAS GIVEN TO MY GRANDMOTHER BY THE *CZAR!*
MY WIDOW'S BITE IS TOO *GOOD* FOR THE LIKES OF YOU!
IT ONLY PUTS YOU OUT OF COMMISSION FOR A *LITTLE WHILE!*

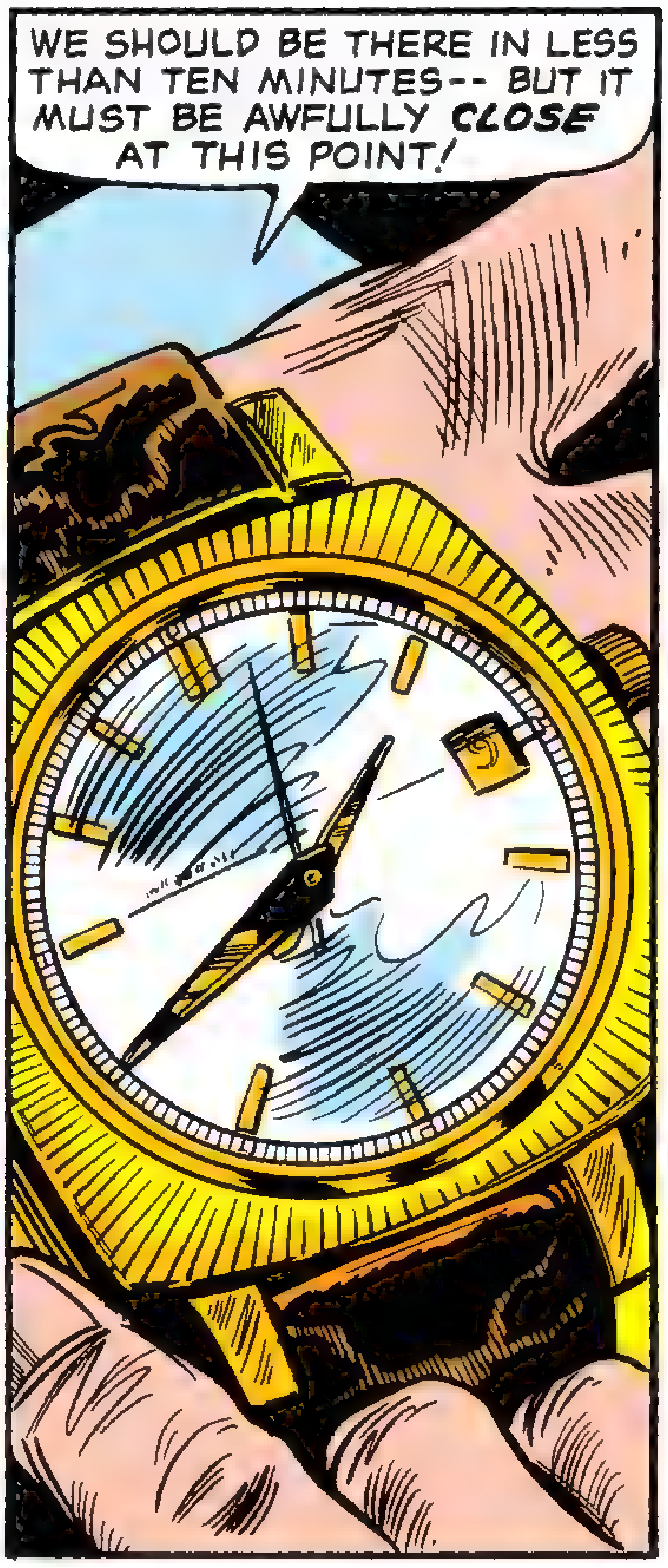

ZZZZZAATT!
LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO CALL THE **POLICE** TO **TIDY UP** THE PLACE A BIT!
THE **CITY JAIL** MUST BE BIGGEST **GARBAGE DUMP** AROUND!
WELL, LITTLE LADY! AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN THE MIDST OF A **BEAUTY NAP!**
YOUR-- UH-- GUESTS NEGLECTED TO **LOCK** THE FRONT DOOR!
THESE "GENTLEMEN" ARE **EMPLOYED** BY SOME CHARACTER CALLED "**THE DON**"!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT FROM **ME**, BUT I THINK I'LL LET THE **POLICE** FIND THAT OUT!
WELL, MAKE IT **QUICK!** WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU **UPTOWN** BEFORE SCAROLA BECOMES **PUBLIC MARTYR #1!**
I SUGGEST YOU PUT THE PHONE DOWN GENTLY-- **VERY GENTLY!**
WHAT DO YOU CREEPS **WANT** WITH THE **BLACK WIDOW** ANYWAY!

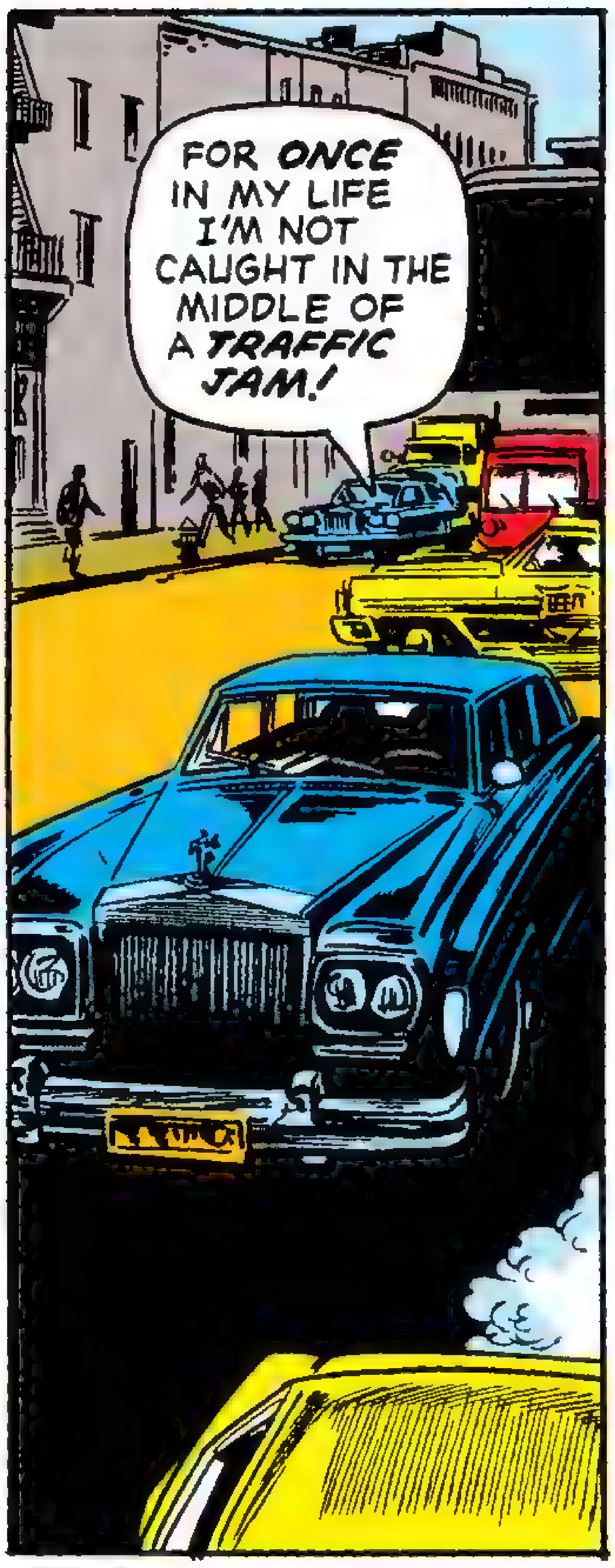

WHILE JUST A *TEN MINUTE DRIVE* AWAY...
DON'T THOSE COPS EVER GET *TIRED?* FOR ALL THEIR BIG TALK, THEY HAVEN'T MADE A MOVE *YET!*
YOU *CRAZY,* MAN? YOU DON'T WANT 'EM *GASSIN'* US OUTTA HERE, DO YOU?
HEY, CARLOS! YOU SAID THE BLACK WIDOW WOULD FIX *EVERYTHING!* LOOKS LIKE SHE COULDN'T *CARE LESS* ABOUT US-- AND WHAT WE'RE TRYIN' TO DO!
IF THE *BLACK WIDOW'S* NOT HERE, SHE'S GOT HER REASONS! BUT WITH HER OR WITHOUT HER-- I SAY WE DON'T GIVE UP-- *NO MATTER WHAT!*
RIGHT ON, MAN! WE WALK OUTTA THIS JOINT...
...AND *SCAROLA* WILL HAVE THE ELECTION *TIED UP* LIKE A PIG ON A SPIT!
WE GOTTA LET *EVERYONE* KNOW HOW HE'S BEEN *DRAINING* THE GUTS OUTTA THIS COMMUNITY!
WE'RE GIVING YOU FIFTEEN MORE MINUTES... AND THAT'S OUR *FINAL* OFFER!
POLICE
17
THIS IS GONNA BE THE *LONGEST* FIFTEEN MINUTES I EVER SPENT!
IF *ONLY* THOSE KIDS WOULD COME OUT AND TALK TO THE MAYOR! FROM SOME O' THE THINGS I'VE HEARD ABOUT *SCAROLA,* I CAN'T *BLAME* THEM FOR BEING SO *STUBBORN!*
LOOKS LIKE *ZERO HOUR* IS-- *2:45!*

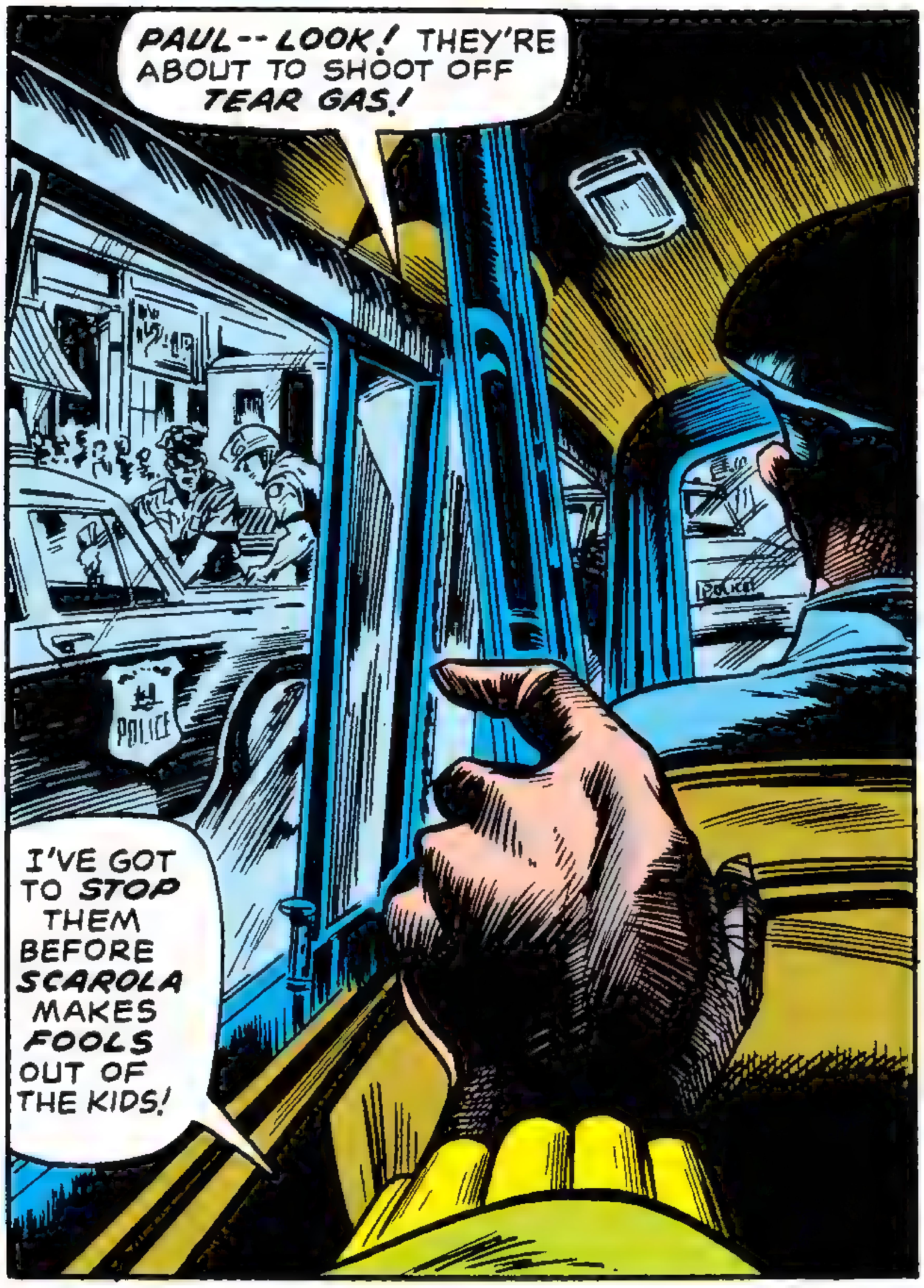

BUT THE BLACK WIDOW HAS A VERY GOOD REASON FOR NOT SHOWING UP...
AND SO YOU SEE, MY DEAR, THE COPS HAVE TO RUN THOSE PUNKS OUT OF THAT BUILDING! YOU MUST UNDERSTAND HOW I HATE COMPETITION!
ONCE THOSE RADICALS ARE LOCKED UP WHERE THEY BELONG, THE PUBLIC WILL BACK THE MACHINE!
NOT NECESSARILY SO!
AND WHY NOT? IT IS THE POLITICIAN WHO IS THE REVOLUTIONARY'S SCAPEGOAT, AND ONCE THOSE TROUBLE MAKERS ARE PUT AWAY...
...THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE TO SHOW THEIR GRATITUDE BY BACKING THE POWERS THAT BE!
AND THEY, MY DEAR, ARE WHAT KEEPS ME IN BUSINESS!
COUGH--COUGH! HEY, CUT THAT OUT! I'M GONNA GAG TO DEATH!
SO PAUL'S GOT A BATTLE PLAN, HAS HE!
HE'S SMOKING UP THE ROOM ENOUGH TO DISTRACT EVERYONE! HE'S A PRETTY SHARP OPERATOR-- FOR A NEWSPAPER GUY...
THIS'LL GIVE ME JUST ENOUGH TIME TO LAUNCH MY WIDOW'S WEB!
LOOKS LIKE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME POLLUTION DID ANY GOOD!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BOYS? YOU ALL CHOKED UP ABOUT ME?
COUGH!
COUGH!
WHOMP!

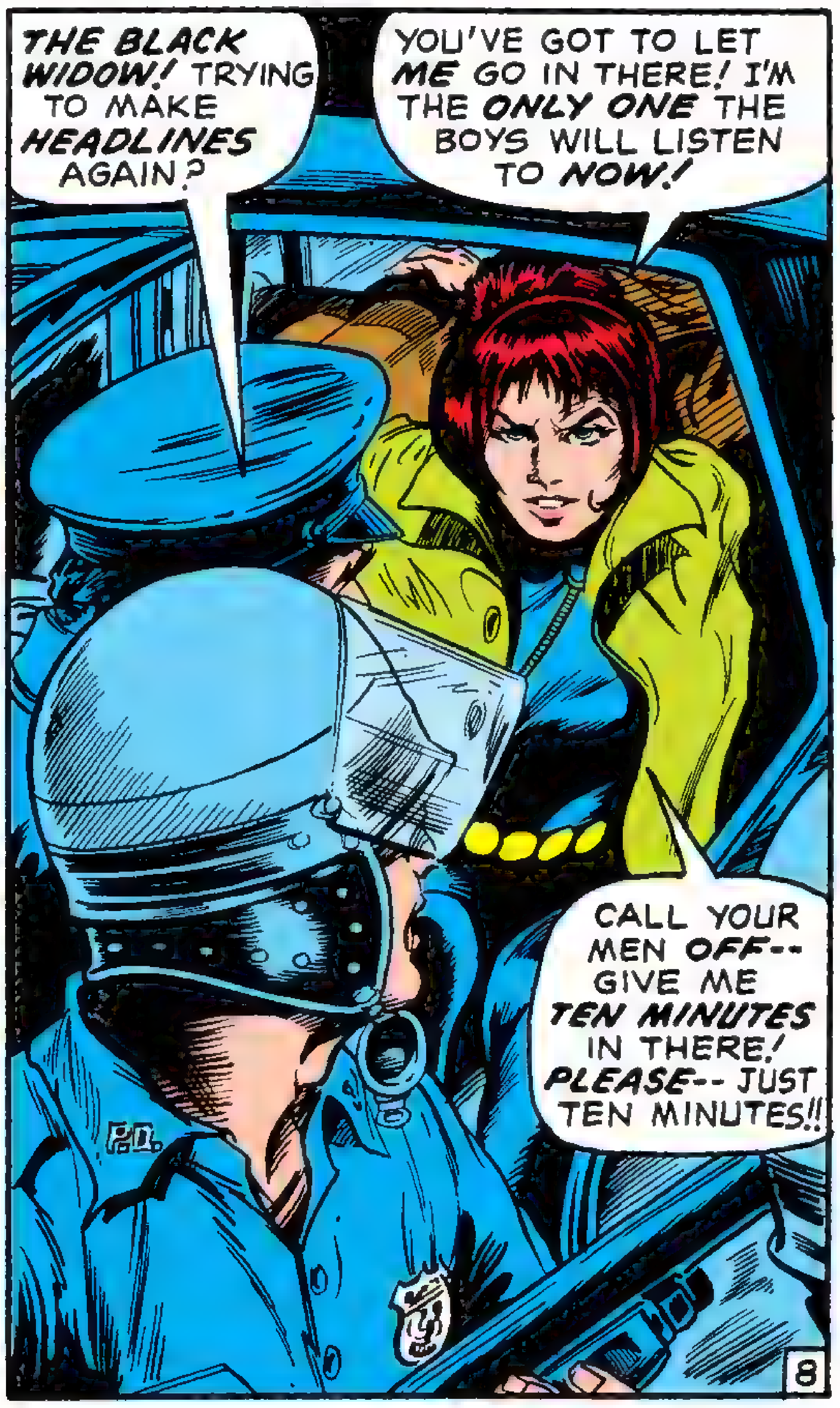

SWAKK!
I CAN'T SAY I BLAME THEM, NATASHA! YOU'RE QUITE A GIRL!
I WOULDN'T DO THIS FOR JUST ANYONE Y'KNOW!
THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL!
UMMF!
THAT'S IT, PAUL! THEY'RE ALL OUT!
NOW HOW ABOUT US SPLITTING WHILE WE CAN?
WE CAN SPARE A MINUTE, NATASHA-- I'VE GOT TO SEE WHO THAT BIG JERK IN THE MASK IS!
I THINK GETTING UPTOWN IS MORE IMPORTANT AT THE MOMENT... YOU CAN LOOK FOR A STORY ELSEWHERE, NEWSPAPER MAN!
JUST BEFORE I CAME OVER, THE MAYOR GAVE THE KIDS AN ULTIMATUM-- AND ON TELEVISION, YET! WE'LL BE LUCKY IF WE MAKE IT BEFORE THE SHOWDOWN!
THEY WERE ALL COUNTING ON ME, PAUL. THEY MUST THINK I COULDN'T CARE LESS!

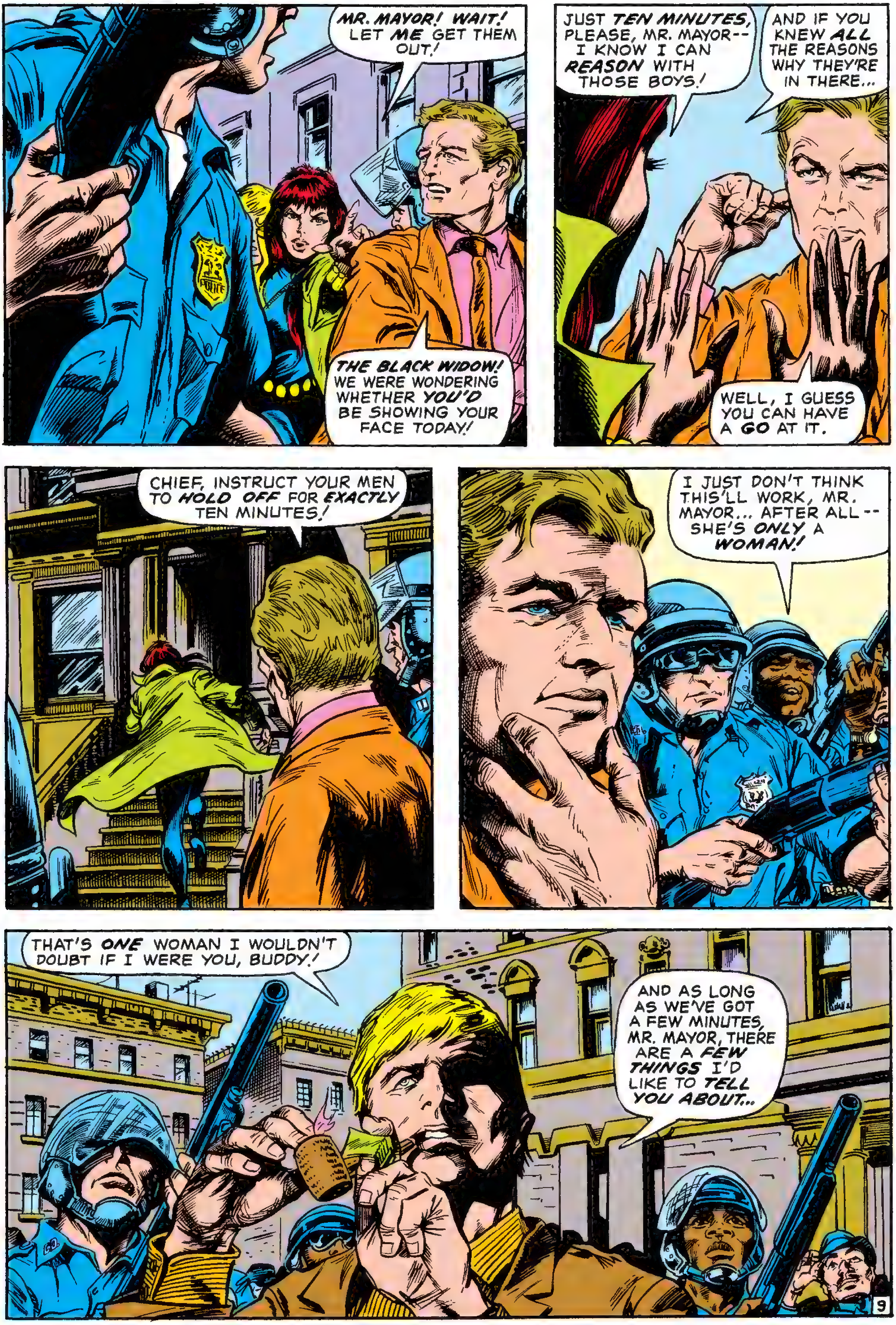

WHEN WE GET THERE, PAUL, I WANT YOU TO TELL THE MAYOR *EVERYTHING* THE KIDS TOLD ME ABOUT SCAROLA.
AND IF *I'M* LUCKY-- THOSE KIDS WILL *STILL* BE IN THE BUILDING WHEN WE ARRIVE!

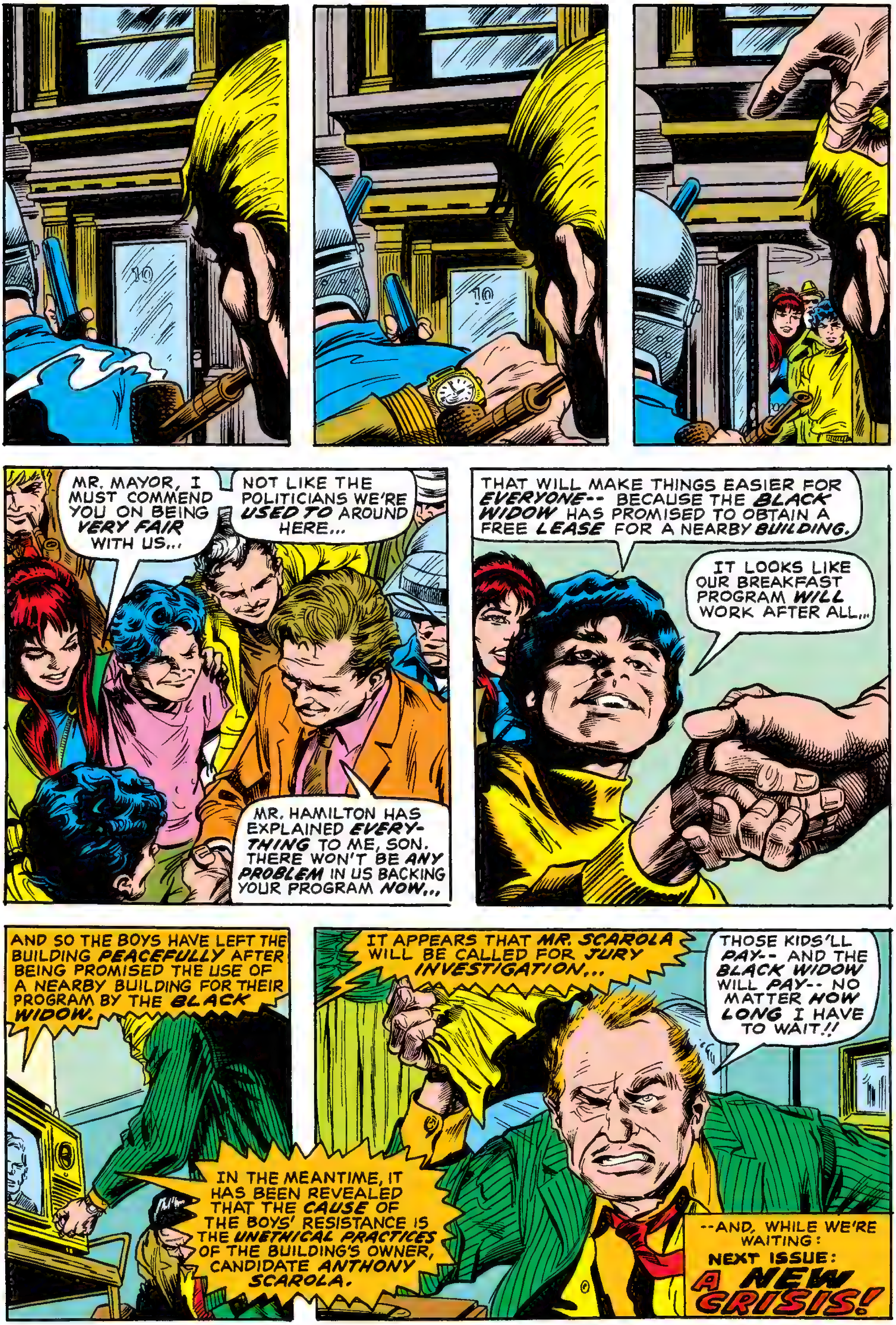

WE SHOULD BE THERE IN LESS THAN TEN MINUTES-- BUT IT MUST BE AWFULLY *CLOSE* AT THIS POINT!


FOR *ONCE* IN MY LIFE I'M NOT CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A *TRAFFIC JAM!*


PAUL--LOOK! THEY'RE ABOUT TO SHOOT OFF *TEAR GAS!*
I'VE GOT TO *STOP* THEM BEFORE *SCAROLA* MAKES *FOOLS* OUT OF THE KIDS!
POLICE


THE BLACK WIDOW! TRYING TO MAKE *HEADLINES* AGAIN?
YOU'VE GOT TO LET *ME* GO IN THERE! I'M THE *ONLY ONE* THE BOYS WILL LISTEN TO *NOW!*
CALL YOUR MEN *OFF*-- GIVE ME *TEN MINUTES* IN THERE! *PLEASE*-- JUST TEN MINUTES!!
P.D.


MR. MAYOR! WAIT! LET ME GET THEM OUT!
THE BLACK WIDOW! WE WERE WONDERING WHETHER YOU'D BE SHOWING YOUR FACE TODAY!
JUST TEN MINUTES, PLEASE, MR. MAYOR-- I KNOW I CAN REASON WITH THOSE BOYS!
AND IF YOU KNEW ALL THE REASONS WHY THEY'RE IN THERE...
WELL, I GUESS YOU CAN HAVE A GO AT IT.
CHIEF, INSTRUCT YOUR MEN TO HOLD OFF FOR EXACTLY TEN MINUTES!
I JUST DON'T THINK THIS'LL WORK, MR. MAYOR... AFTER ALL -- SHE'S ONLY A WOMAN!
THAT'S ONE WOMAN I WOULDN'T DOUBT IF I WERE YOU, BUDDY!
AND AS LONG AS WE'VE GOT A FEW MINUTES, MR. MAYOR, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT...


10
10
MR. MAYOR, I MUST COMMEND YOU ON BEING VERY FAIR WITH US...
NOT LIKE THE POLITICIANS WE'RE USED TO AROUND HERE...
MR. HAMILTON HAS EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO ME, SON. THERE WON'T BE ANY PROBLEM IN US BACKING YOUR PROGRAM NOW...
THAT WILL MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR EVERYONE-- BECAUSE THE BLACK WIDOW HAS PROMISED TO OBTAIN A FREE LEASE FOR A NEARBY BUILDING.
IT LOOKS LIKE OUR BREAKFAST PROGRAM WILL WORK AFTER ALL...
AND SO THE BOYS HAVE LEFT THE BUILDING PEACEFULLY AFTER BEING PROMISED THE USE OF A NEARBY BUILDING FOR THEIR PROGRAM BY THE BLACK WIDOW.
IN THE MEANTIME, IT HAS BEEN REVEALED THAT THE CAUSE OF THE BOYS' RESISTANCE IS THE UNETHICAL PRACTICES OF THE BUILDING'S OWNER, CANDIDATE ANTHONY SCAROLA.
IT APPEARS THAT MR. SCAROLA WILL BE CALLED FOR JURY INVESTIGATION...
THOSE KIDS'LL PAY-- AND THE BLACK WIDOW WILL PAY-- NO MATTER HOW LONG I HAVE TO WAIT!!
--AND, WHILE WE'RE WAITING: NEXT ISSUE: A NEW CRISIS!

AMAZING ADVENTURES
15¢
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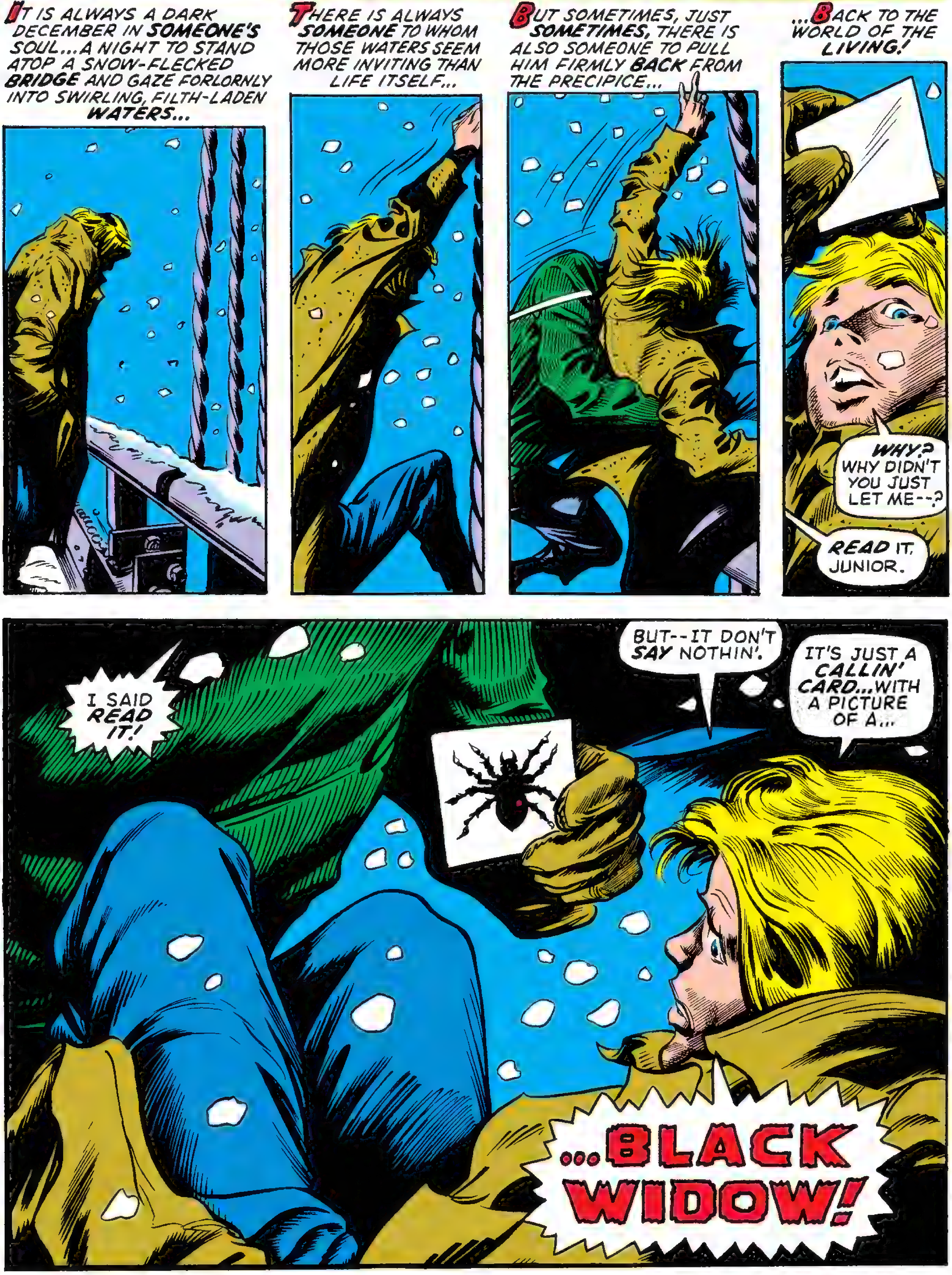
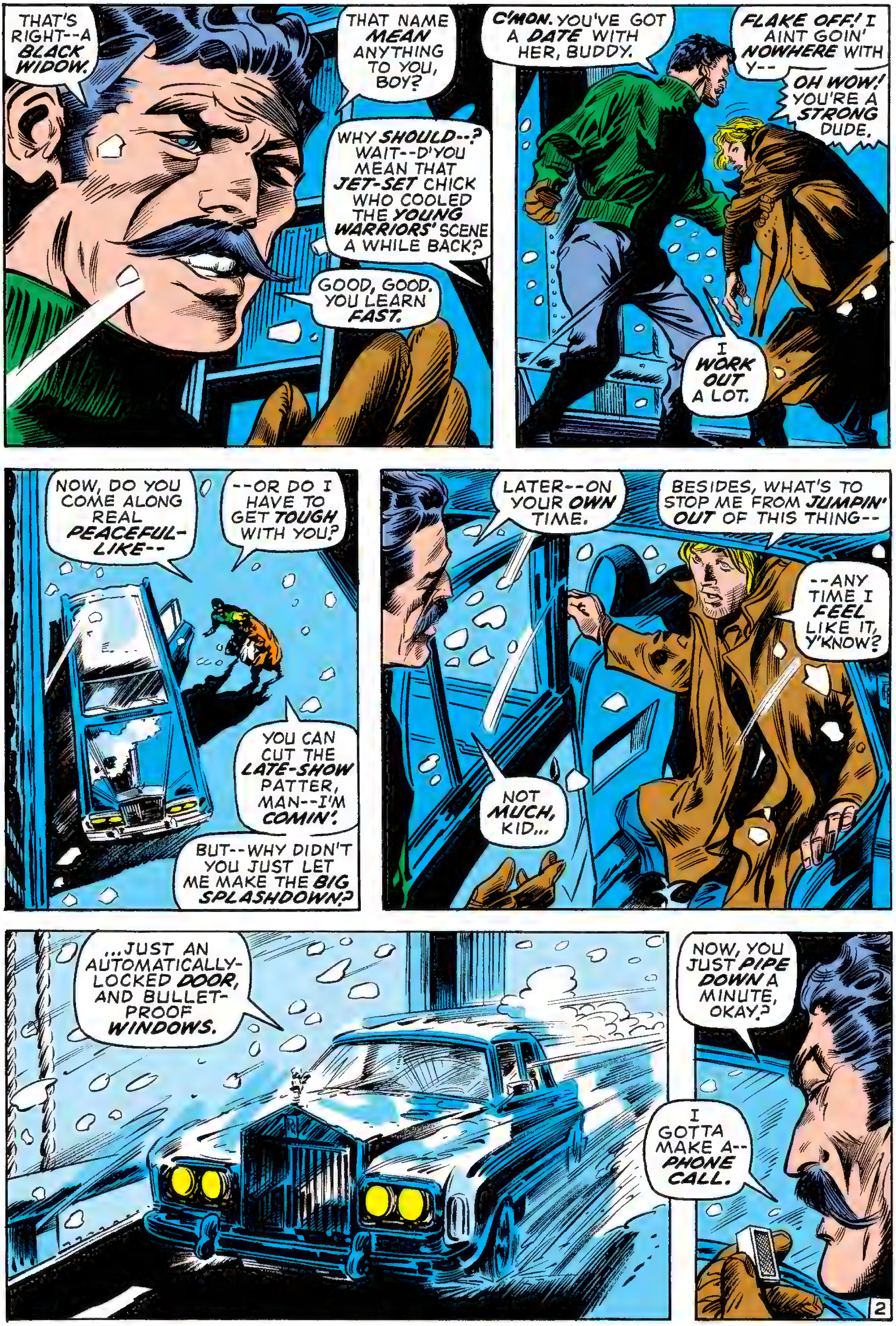
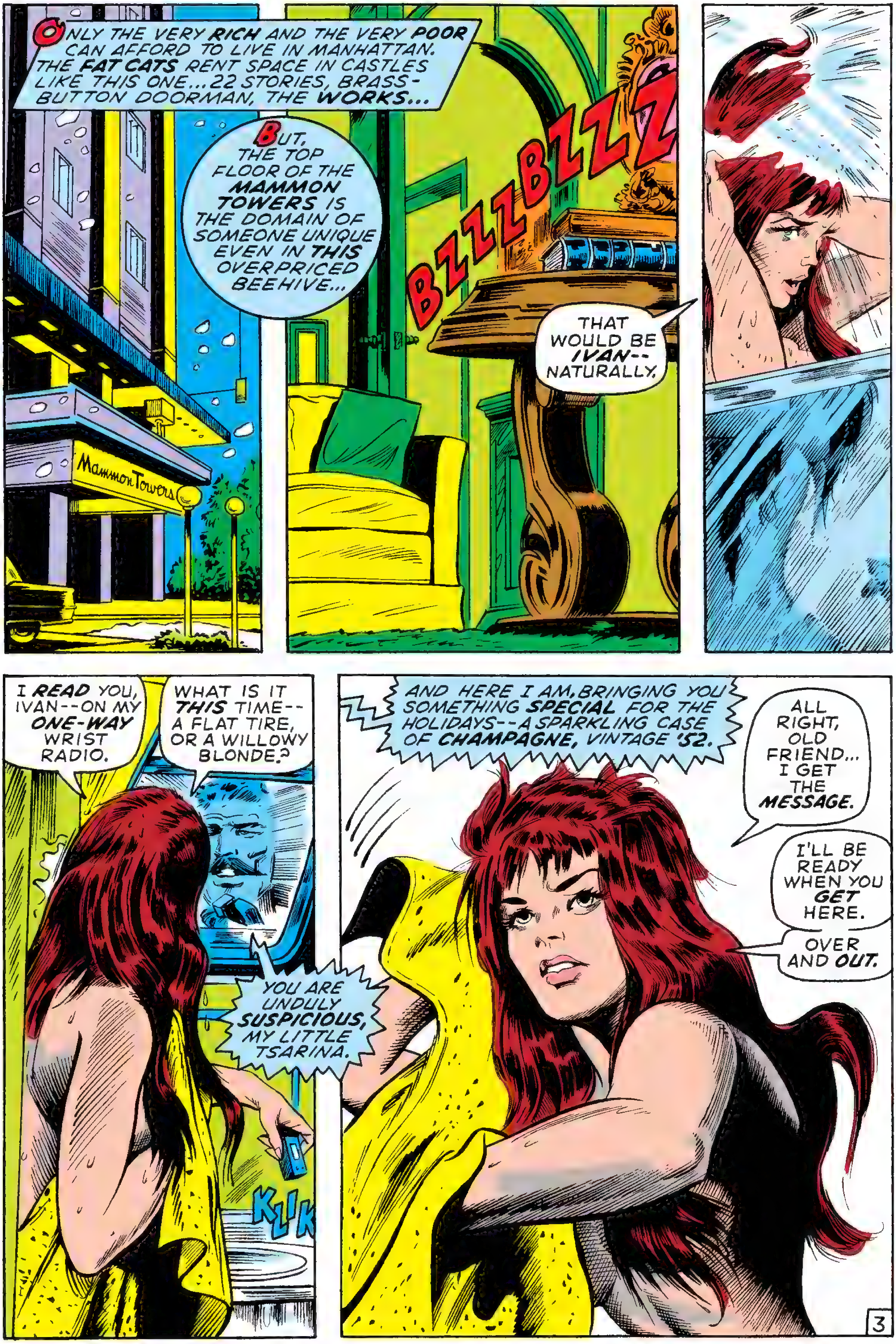
CC
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
AMAZING ADVENTURES
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
IF BLACK BOLT SPEAKS--
A CITY DIES!
MERRY CHRISTMAS, WIDOW--FROM THE ASTROLOGER!!

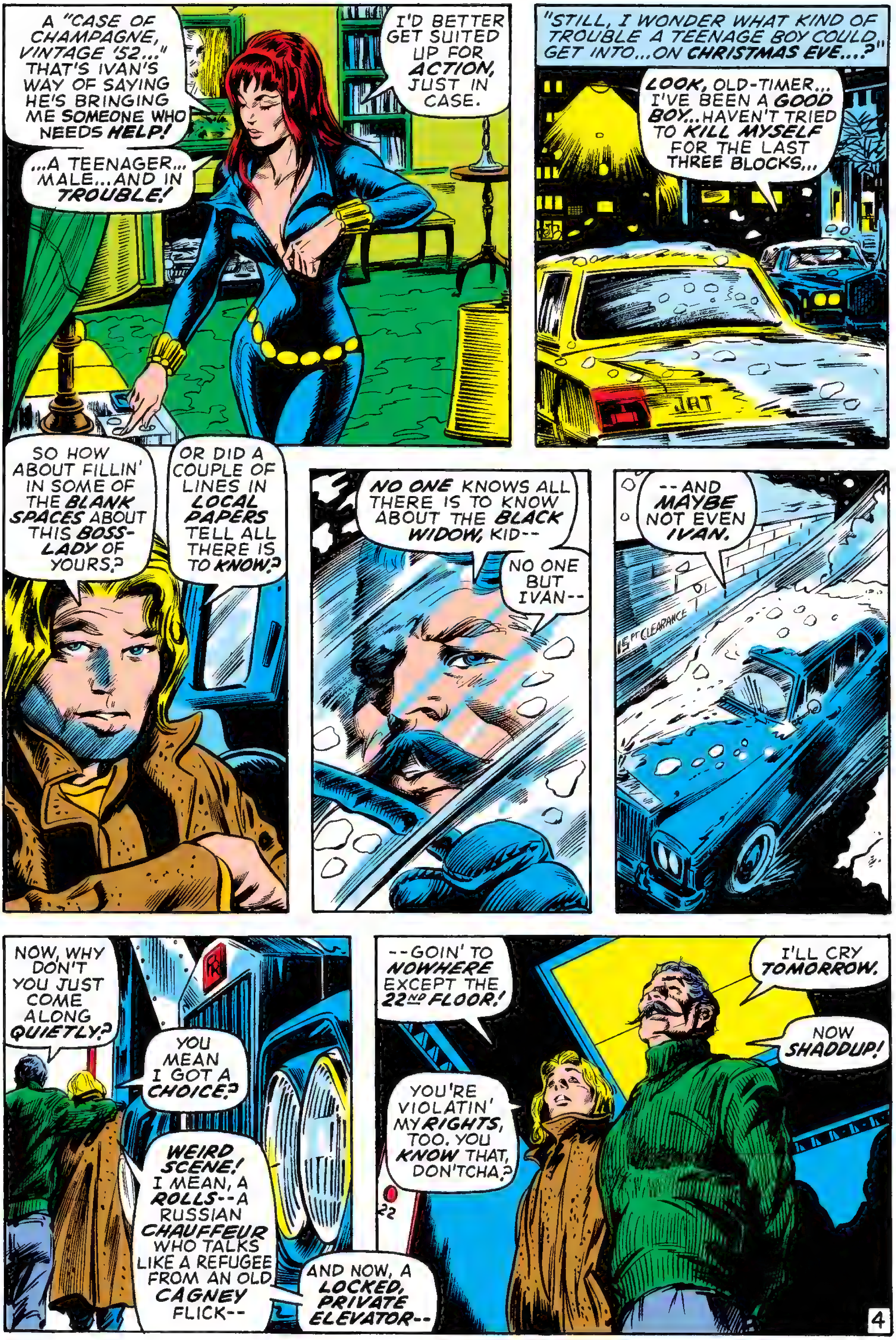
...AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT

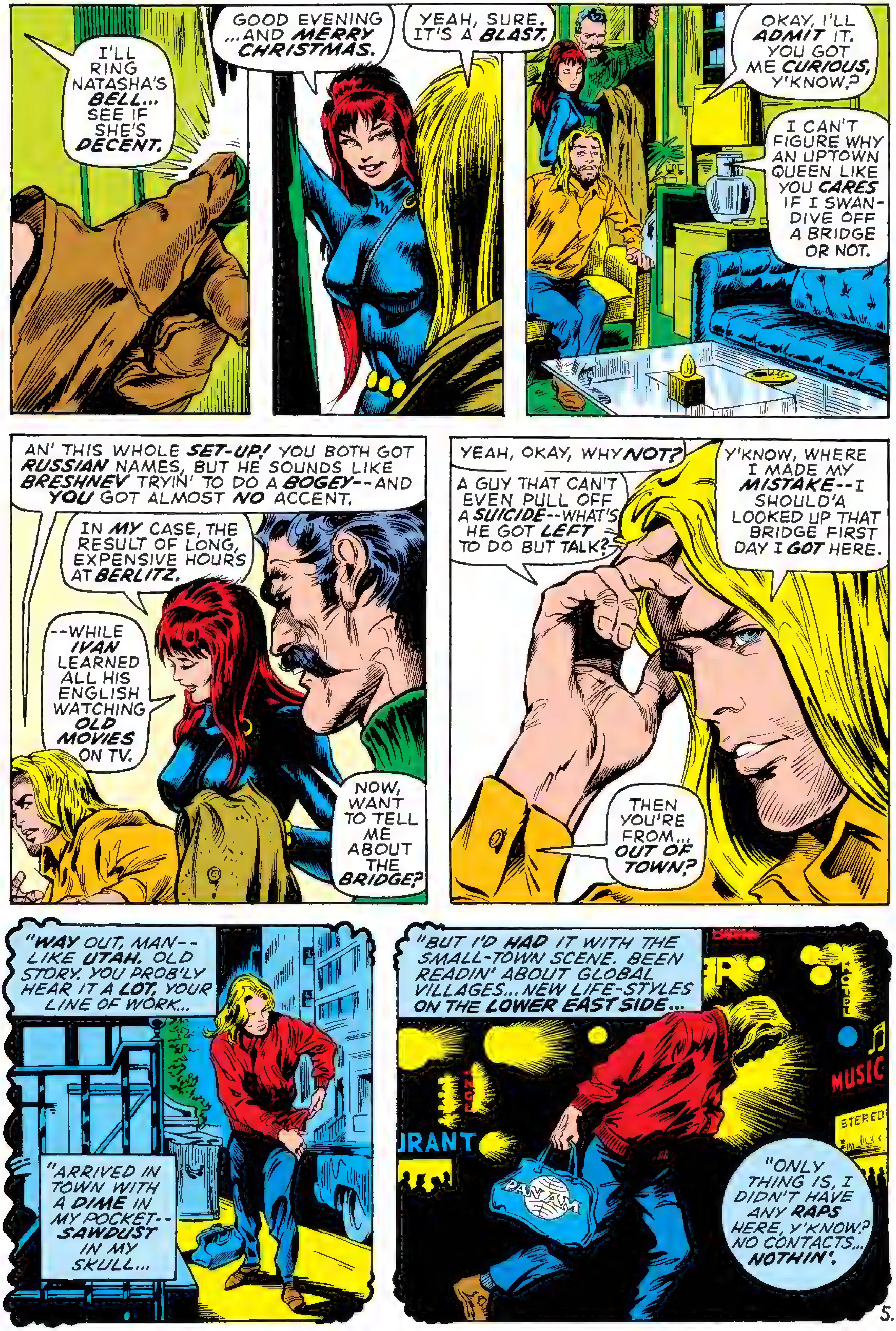

IT IS ALWAYS A DARK DECEMBER IN SOMEONE'S SOUL...A NIGHT TO STAND ATOP A SNOW-FLECKED BRIDGE AND GAZE FORLORNLY INTO SWIRLING, FILTH-LADEN WATERS...
THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE TO WHOM THOSE WATERS SEEM MORE INVITING THAN LIFE ITSELF...
BUT SOMETIMES, JUST SOMETIMES, THERE IS ALSO SOMEONE TO PULL HIM FIRMLY BACK FROM THE PRECIPICE...
...BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING!
WHY? WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST LET ME--?
READ IT, JUNIOR.
I SAID READ IT!
BUT--IT DON'T SAY NOTHIN'.
IT'S JUST A CALLIN' CARD...WITH A PICTURE OF A...
...BLACK WIDOW!

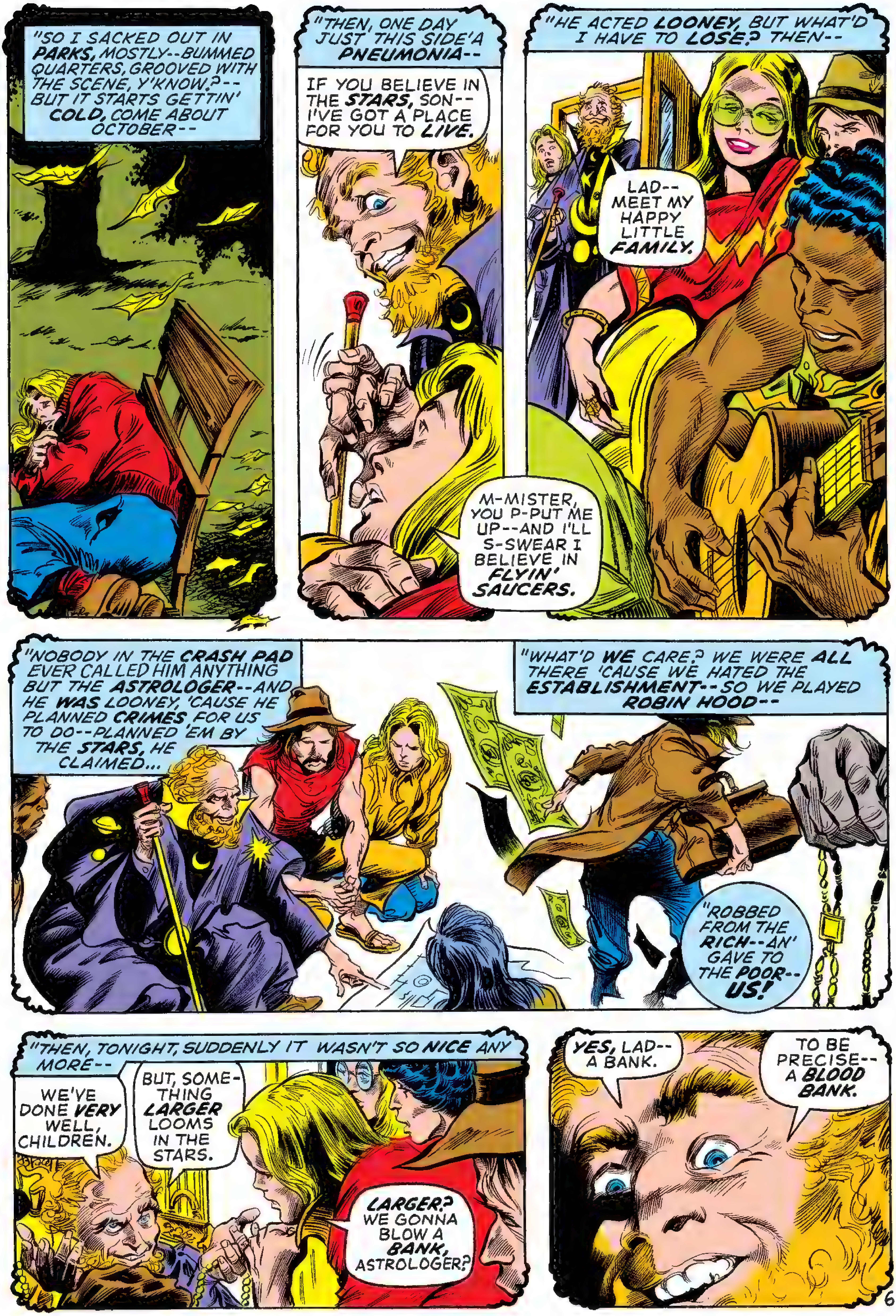
STAN LEE • ROY THOMAS • GENE COLAN • BILL EVERETT • ARTIE SIMEK
EDITOR WRITER ARTIST INKER LETTERER

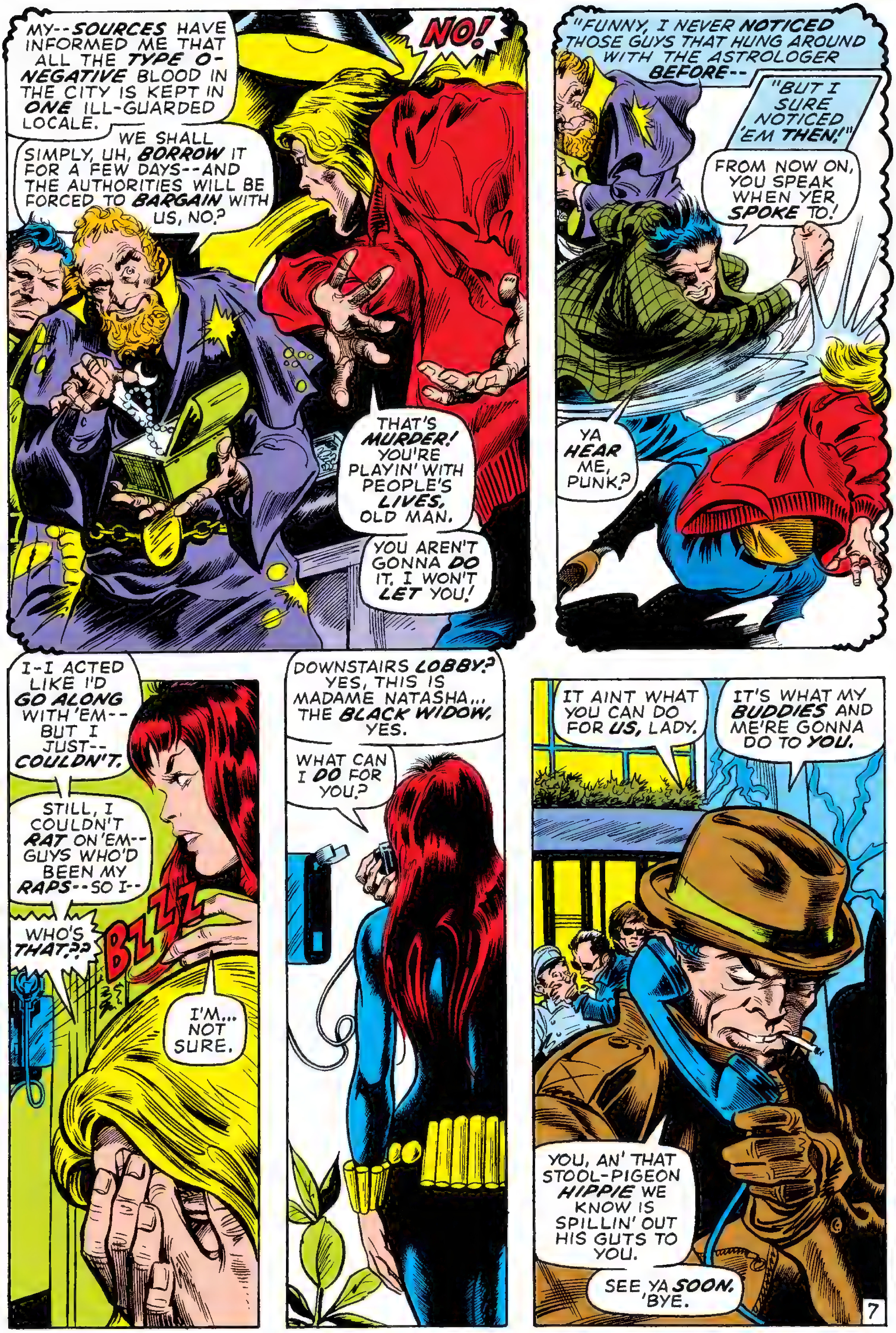

THAT'S RIGHT--A *BLACK WIDOW.*
THAT NAME *MEAN* ANYTHING TO YOU, BOY?
WHY *SHOULD--?* WAIT--D'YOU MEAN THAT *JET-SET* CHICK WHO COOLED THE *YOUNG WARRIORS'* SCENE A WHILE BACK?
GOOD, GOOD. YOU LEARN *FAST.*
C'MON. YOU'VE GOT A *DATE* WITH HER, BUDDY.
FLAKE OFF! I AINT GOIN' *NOWHERE* WITH Y--
OH WOW! YOU'RE A *STRONG* DUDE.
I *WORK OUT* A LOT.
NOW, DO YOU COME ALONG REAL *PEACEFUL-LIKE--*
--OR DO I HAVE TO GET *TOUGH* WITH YOU?
YOU CAN CUT THE *LATE-SHOW* PATTER, MAN--I'M *COMIN'.*
BUT--WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST LET ME MAKE THE *BIG SPLASHDOWN?*
LATER--ON YOUR *OWN* TIME.
BESIDES, WHAT'S TO STOP ME FROM *JUMPIN' OUT* OF THIS THING--
--ANY TIME I *FEEL* LIKE IT, Y'KNOW?
NOT *MUCH,* KID...
...JUST AN AUTOMATICALLY-LOCKED *DOOR,* AND BULLET-PROOF *WINDOWS.*
NOW, YOU JUST *PIPE DOWN* A MINUTE, OKAY?
I GOTTA MAKE A-- *PHONE CALL.*

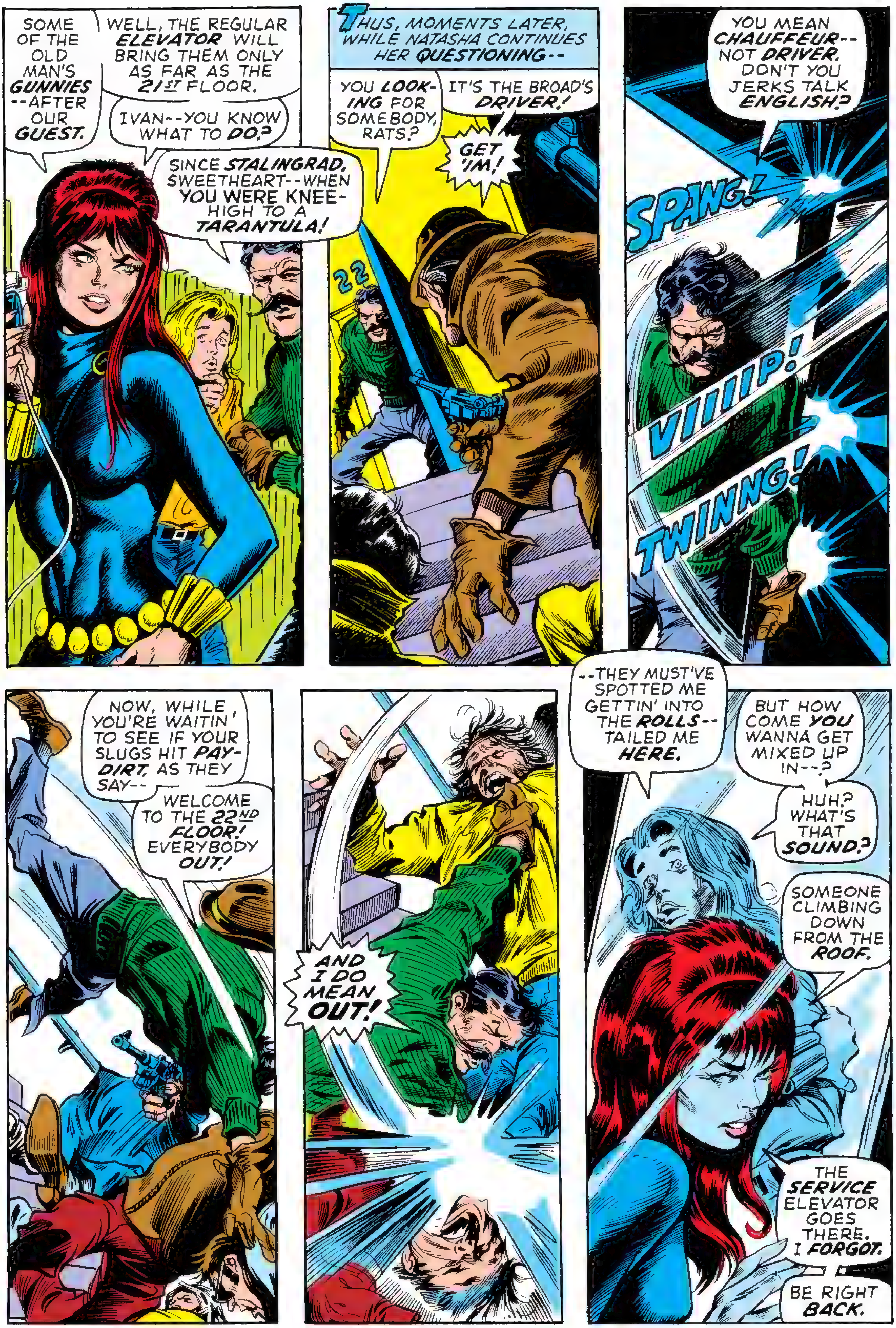

ONLY THE VERY RICH AND THE VERY POOR CAN AFFORD TO LIVE IN MANHATTAN. THE FAT CATS RENT SPACE IN CASTLES LIKE THIS ONE...22 STORIES, BRASS-BUTTON DOORMAN, THE WORKS...
Mammon Towers
BUT, THE TOP FLOOR OF THE MAMMON TOWERS IS THE DOMAIN OF SOMEONE UNIQUE EVEN IN THIS OVERPRICED BEEHIVE...
BZZZBZZZ
THAT WOULD BE IVAN--NATURALLY.
I READ YOU, IVAN--ON MY ONE-WAY WRIST RADIO.
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME--A FLAT TIRE, OR A WILLOWY BLONDE?
YOU ARE UNDULY SUSPICIOUS, MY LITTLE TSARINA.
KLIK
AND HERE I AM, BRINGING YOU SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR THE HOLIDAYS--A SPARKLING CASE OF CHAMPAGNE, VINTAGE '52.
ALL RIGHT, OLD FRIEND... I GET THE MESSAGE.
I'LL BE READY WHEN YOU GET HERE.
OVER AND OUT.

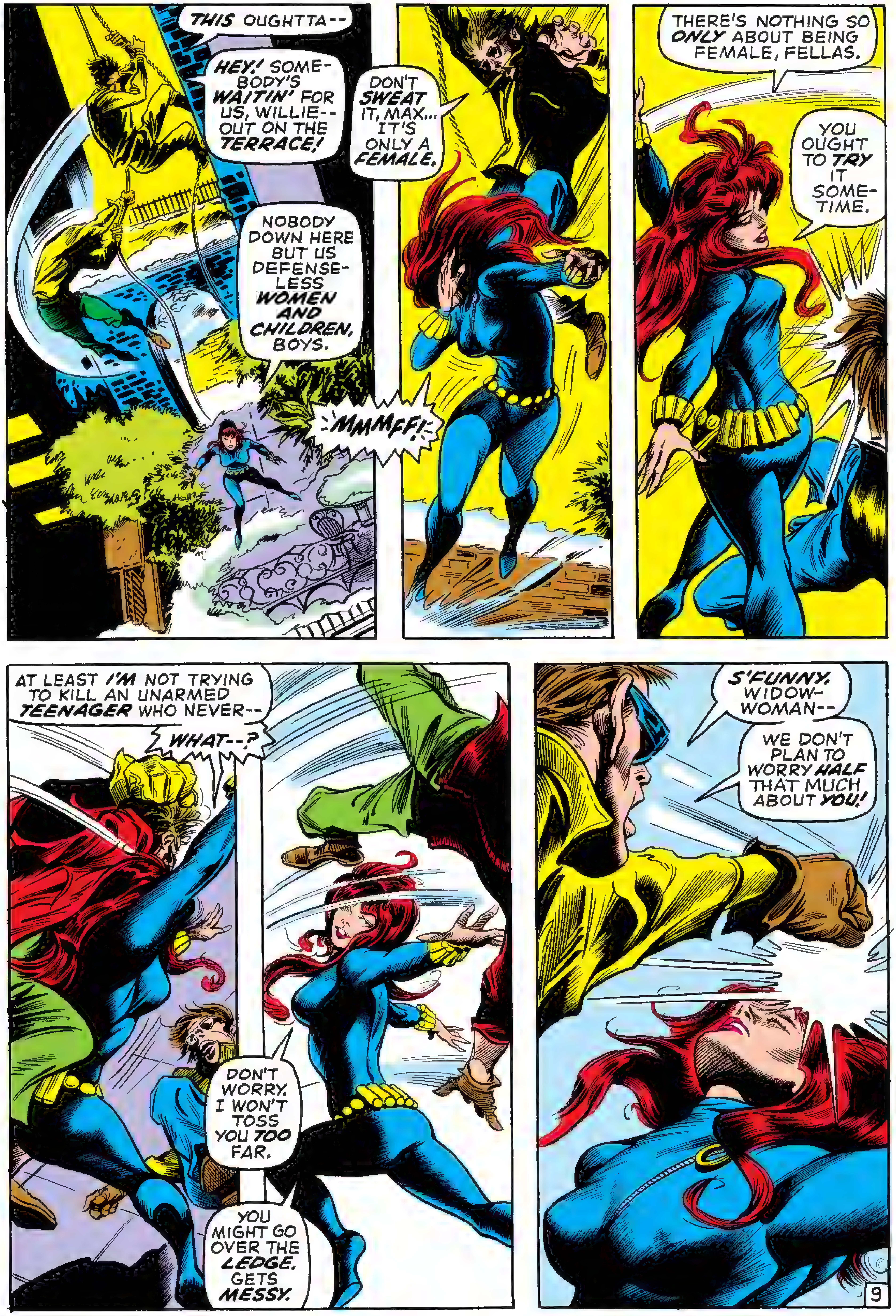

A "CASE OF CHAMPAGNE, VINTAGE '52..." THAT'S IVAN'S WAY OF SAYING HE'S BRINGING ME SOMEONE WHO NEEDS HELP!
...A TEENAGER... MALE... AND IN TROUBLE!
I'D BETTER GET SUITED UP FOR ACTION, JUST IN CASE.
"STILL, I WONDER WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE A TEENAGE BOY COULD GET INTO... ON CHRISTMAS EVE...?"
LOOK, OLD-TIMER... I'VE BEEN A GOOD BOY... HAVEN'T TRIED TO KILL MYSELF FOR THE LAST THREE BLOCKS...
JRT
SO HOW ABOUT FILLIN' IN SOME OF THE BLANK SPACES ABOUT THIS BOSS-LADY OF YOURS?
OR DID A COUPLE OF LINES IN LOCAL PAPERS TELL ALL THERE IS TO KNOW?
NO ONE KNOWS ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE BLACK WIDOW, KID--
NO ONE BUT IVAN--
--AND MAYBE NOT EVEN IVAN.
15 FT CLEARANCE
NOW, WHY DON'T YOU JUST COME ALONG QUIETLY?
YOU MEAN I GOT A CHOICE?
WEIRD SCENE! I MEAN, A ROLLS--A RUSSIAN CHAUFFEUR WHO TALKS LIKE A REFUGEE FROM AN OLD CAGNEY FLICK--
AND NOW, A LOCKED, PRIVATE ELEVATOR--
--GOIN' TO NOWHERE EXCEPT THE 22ND FLOOR!
YOU'RE VIOLATIN' MY RIGHTS, TOO, YOU KNOW THAT, DON'TCHA?
22
I'LL CRY TOMORROW.
NOW SHADDUP!

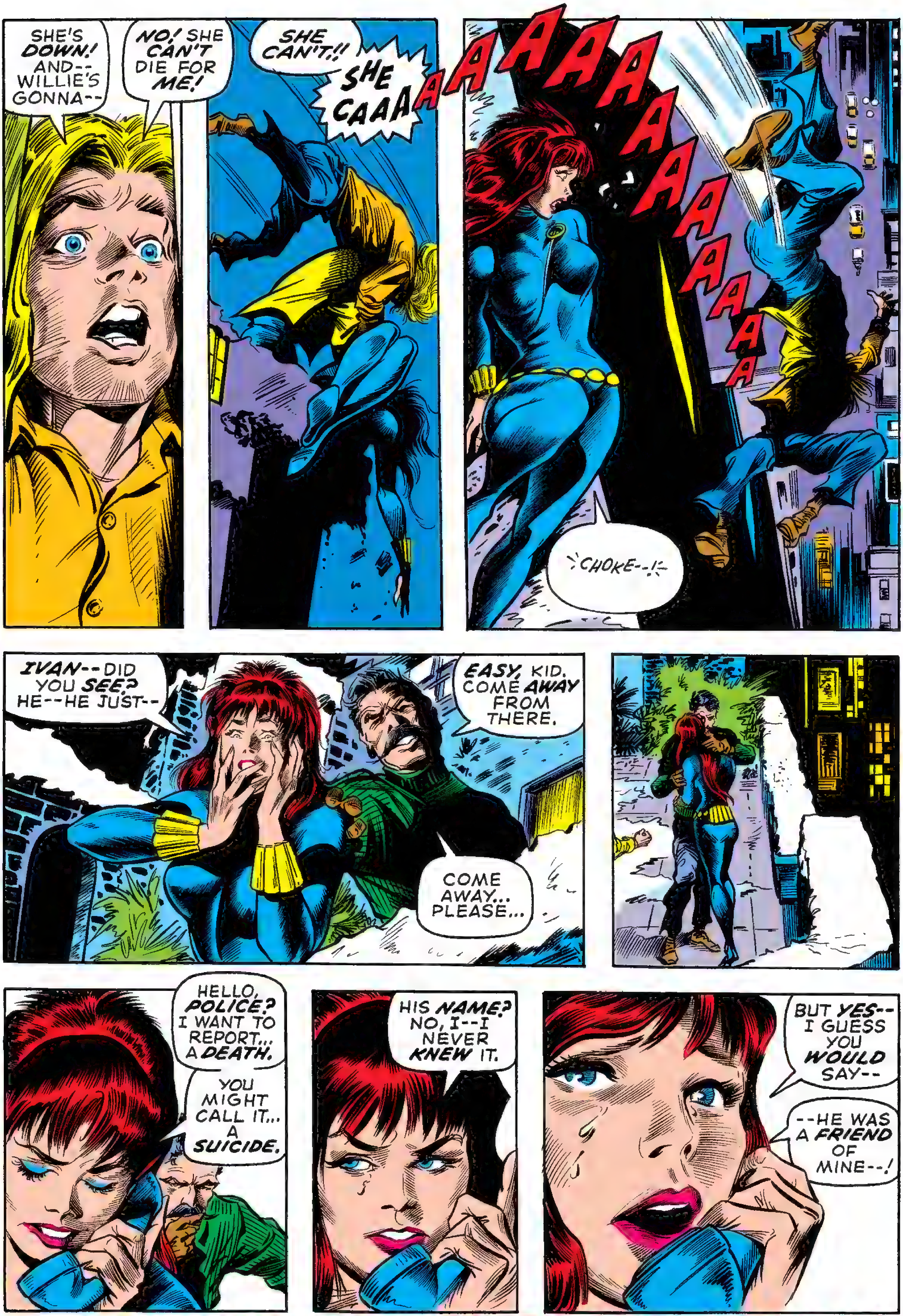

I'LL RING NATASHA'S **BELL**... SEE IF SHE'S **DECENT**.
GOOD EVENING ...AND **MERRY CHRISTMAS**.
YEAH, SURE. IT'S A **BLAST**.
OKAY, I'LL **ADMIT** IT. YOU GOT ME **CURIOUS**, Y'KNOW?
I CAN'T FIGURE WHY AN UPTOWN QUEEN LIKE YOU **CARES** IF I SWAN-DIVE OFF A BRIDGE OR NOT.
AN' THIS WHOLE **SET-UP!** YOU BOTH GOT **RUSSIAN** NAMES, BUT HE SOUNDS LIKE **BRESHNEV** TRYIN' TO DO A **BOGEY**--AND **YOU** GOT ALMOST **NO** ACCENT.
IN **MY** CASE, THE RESULT OF LONG, EXPENSIVE HOURS AT **BERLITZ**.
--WHILE **IVAN** LEARNED ALL HIS ENGLISH WATCHING **OLD MOVIES** ON TV.
NOW, WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT THE **BRIDGE**?
YEAH, OKAY, WHY **NOT**?
A GUY THAT CAN'T EVEN PULL OFF A **SUICIDE**--WHAT'S HE GOT **LEFT** TO DO BUT TALK?
Y'KNOW, WHERE I MADE MY **MISTAKE**--I SHOULD'A LOOKED UP THAT BRIDGE FIRST DAY I **GOT** HERE.
THEN YOU'RE FROM... **OUT OF TOWN**?
"**WAY** OUT, MAN--LIKE **UTAH**. OLD STORY. YOU PROB'LY HEAR IT A **LOT**, YOUR LINE OF WORK...
"ARRIVED IN TOWN WITH A **DIME** IN MY POCKET--**SAWDUST** IN MY SKULL...
"BUT I'D **HAD** IT WITH THE SMALL-TOWN SCENE. BEEN READIN' ABOUT GLOBAL VILLAGES... NEW LIFE-STYLES ON THE **LOWER EAST SIDE**...
RANT
PAN AM
MUSIC
STEREO
"ONLY THING IS, I DIDN'T HAVE ANY **RAPS** HERE, Y'KNOW? NO CONTACTS... **NOTHIN'**.


"SO I SACKED OUT IN PARKS, MOSTLY--BUMMED QUARTERS, GROOVED WITH THE SCENE, Y'KNOW?--BUT IT STARTS GETTIN' COLD, COME ABOUT OCTOBER--
"THEN, ONE DAY JUST THIS SIDE'A PNEUMONIA--
IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE STARS, SON--I'VE GOT A PLACE FOR YOU TO LIVE.
M-MISTER, YOU P-PUT ME UP--AND I'LL S-SWEAR I BELIEVE IN FLYIN' SAUCERS.
"HE ACTED LOONEY, BUT WHAT'D I HAVE TO LOSE? THEN--
LAD--MEET MY HAPPY LITTLE FAMILY.
"NOBODY IN THE CRASH PAD EVER CALLED HIM ANYTHING BUT THE ASTROLOGER--AND HE WAS LOONEY, 'CAUSE HE PLANNED CRIMES FOR US TO DO--PLANNED 'EM BY THE STARS, HE CLAIMED...
"WHAT'D WE CARE? WE WERE ALL THERE 'CAUSE WE HATED THE ESTABLISHMENT--SO WE PLAYED ROBIN HOOD--
"ROBBED FROM THE RICH--AN' GAVE TO THE POOR--US!
"THEN, TONIGHT, SUDDENLY IT WASN'T SO NICE ANY MORE--
WE'VE DONE VERY WELL, CHILDREN.
BUT, SOMETHING LARGER LOOMS IN THE STARS.
LARGER? WE GONNA BLOW A BANK, ASTROLOGER?
YES, LAD--A BANK.
TO BE PRECISE--A BLOOD BANK.


MY--SOURCES HAVE INFORMED ME THAT ALL THE TYPE O-NEGATIVE BLOOD IN THE CITY IS KEPT IN ONE ILL-GUARDED LOCALE.
WE SHALL SIMPLY, UH, BORROW IT FOR A FEW DAYS--AND THE AUTHORITIES WILL BE FORCED TO BARGAIN WITH US, NO?
NO!
THAT'S MURDER! YOU'RE PLAYIN' WITH PEOPLE'S LIVES, OLD MAN.
YOU AREN'T GONNA DO IT. I WON'T LET YOU!
"FUNNY, I NEVER NOTICED THOSE GUYS THAT HUNG AROUND WITH THE ASTROLOGER BEFORE--
"BUT I SURE NOTICED 'EM THEN!"
FROM NOW ON, YOU SPEAK WHEN YER SPOKE TO!
YA HEAR ME, PUNK?
I-I ACTED LIKE I'D GO ALONG WITH 'EM--BUT I JUST--COULDN'T.
STILL, I COULDN'T RAT ON 'EM--GUYS WHO'D BEEN MY RAPS--SO I--
BZZZ
WHO'S THAT??
I'M... NOT SURE.
DOWNSTAIRS LOBBY? YES, THIS IS MADAME NATASHA... THE BLACK WIDOW, YES.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
IT AINT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR US, LADY.
IT'S WHAT MY BUDDIES AND ME'RE GONNA DO TO YOU.
YOU, AN' THAT STOOL-PIGEON HIPPIE WE KNOW IS SPILLIN' OUT HIS GUTS TO YOU.
SEE YA SOON. 'BYE.


SOME OF THE OLD MAN'S GUNNIES --AFTER OUR GUEST.
WELL, THE REGULAR ELEVATOR WILL BRING THEM ONLY AS FAR AS THE 21ST FLOOR.
IVAN--YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
SINCE STALINGRAD, SWEETHEART--WHEN YOU WERE KNEE-HIGH TO A TARANTULA!
THUS, MOMENTS LATER, WHILE NATASHA CONTINUES HER QUESTIONING--
YOU LOOKING FOR SOMEBODY, RATS?
IT'S THE BROAD'S DRIVER!
GET 'IM!
22
YOU MEAN CHAUFFEUR-- NOT DRIVER. DON'T YOU JERKS TALK ENGLISH?
SPANG!
VIIIIP!
TWINNG!
NOW, WHILE YOU'RE WAITIN' TO SEE IF YOUR SLUGS HIT PAY-DIRT, AS THEY SAY--
WELCOME TO THE 22ND FLOOR! EVERYBODY OUT!
AND I DO MEAN OUT!
--THEY MUST'VE SPOTTED ME GETTIN' INTO THE ROLLS-- TAILED ME HERE.
BUT HOW COME YOU WANNA GET MIXED UP IN--?
HUH? WHAT'S THAT SOUND?
SOMEONE CLIMBING DOWN FROM THE ROOF.
THE SERVICE ELEVATOR GOES THERE. I FORGOT.
BE RIGHT BACK.


THIS OUGHTTA--
HEY! SOMEBODY'S WAITIN' FOR US, WILLIE--OUT ON THE TERRACE!
NOBODY DOWN HERE BUT US DEFENSELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN, BOYS.
MMMFF!
DON'T SWEAT IT, MAX... IT'S ONLY A FEMALE.
THERE'S NOTHING SO ONLY ABOUT BEING FEMALE, FELLAS.
YOU OUGHT TO TRY IT SOMETIME.
AT LEAST I'M NOT TRYING TO KILL AN UNARMED TEENAGER WHO NEVER--
WHAT--?
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T TOSS YOU TOO FAR.
YOU MIGHT GO OVER THE LEDGE. GETS MESSY.
S'FUNNY, WIDOW-WOMAN--
WE DON'T PLAN TO WORRY HALF THAT MUCH ABOUT YOU!


SHE'S DOWN! AND-- WILLIE'S GONNA--
NO! SHE CAN'T DIE FOR ME!
SHE CAN'T!!
SHE CAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
CHOKE--!
IVAN--DID YOU SEE? HE--HE JUST--
EASY, KID. COME AWAY FROM THERE.
COME AWAY... PLEASE...
HELLO, POLICE? I WANT TO REPORT... A DEATH.
YOU MIGHT CALL IT... A SUICIDE.
HIS NAME? NO, I--I NEVER KNEW IT.
BUT YES-- I GUESS YOU WOULD SAY--
--HE WAS A FRIEND OF MINE--!

NEXT: THE WIDOW CRIES: VENGEANCE IS MINE!

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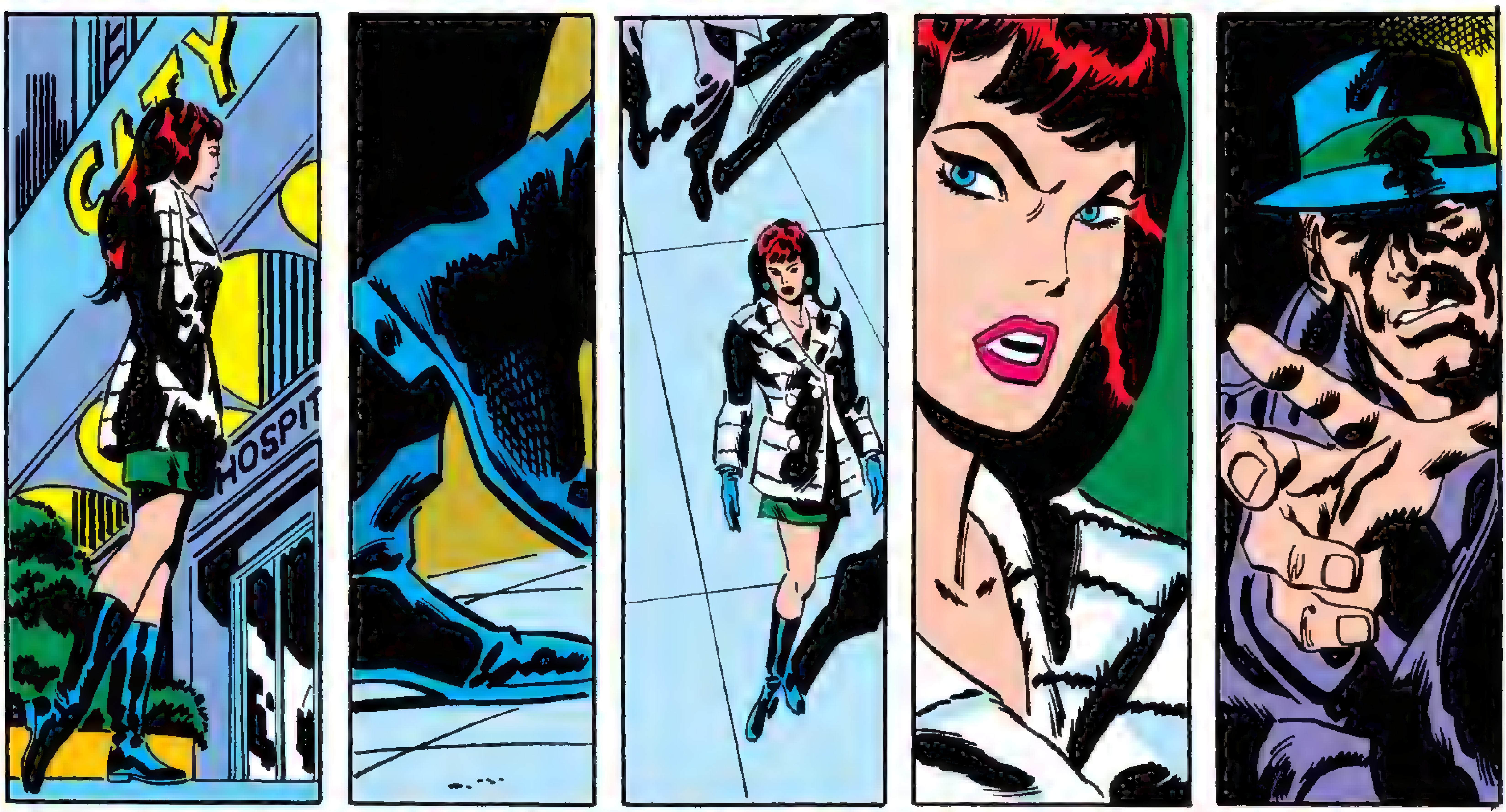
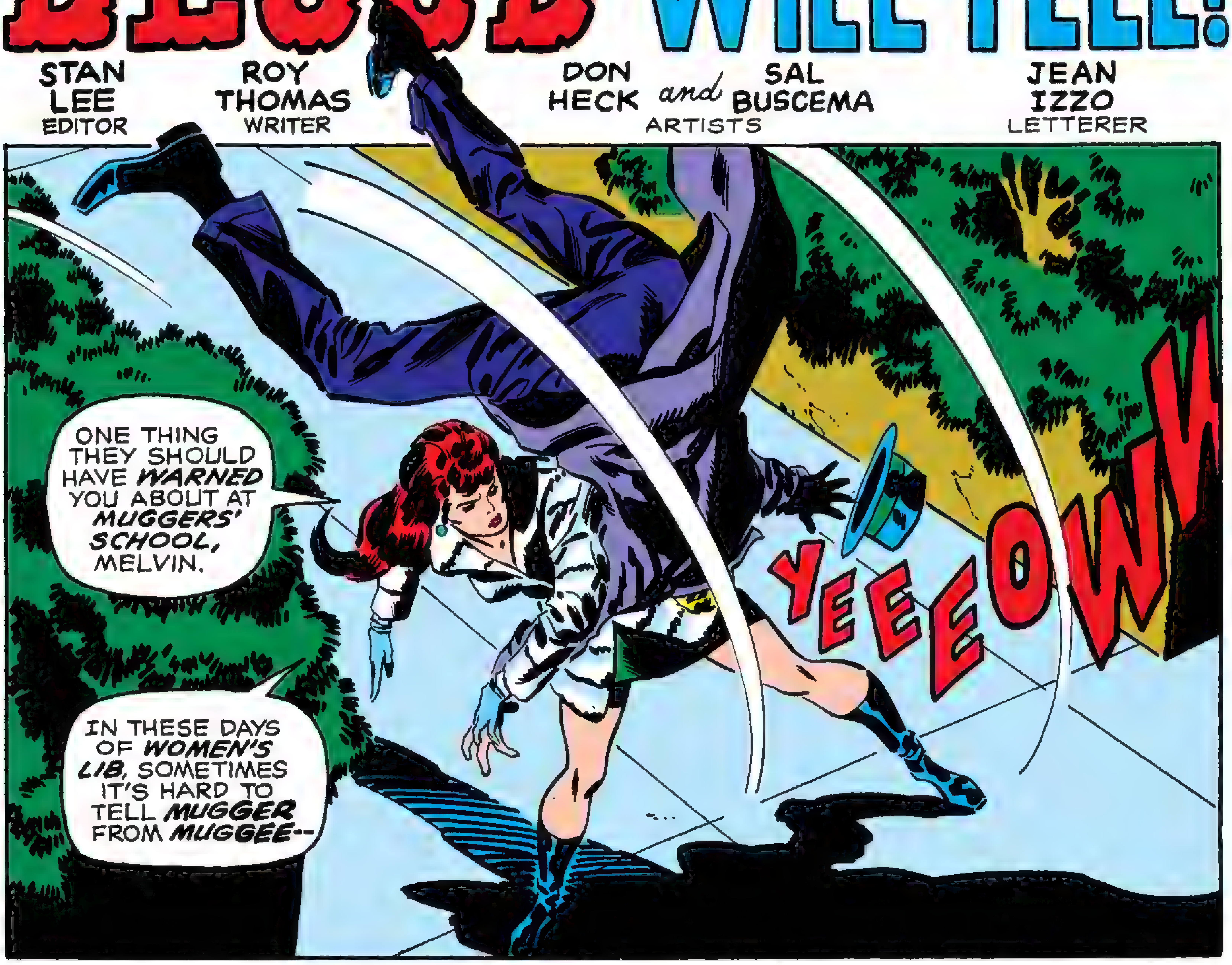
6
MAY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
AMAZING ADVENTURES
FEATURING
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HELL ON EARTH...
AS MAXIMUS THE MAD CONQUERS THE GREAT REFUGE!
I MUST USE MY WIDOW'S BITE AGAINST THOSE THUGS--
--OR BE SHOT DOWN IN COLD BLOOD!
BUT--I CAN'T! I CAN'T!!

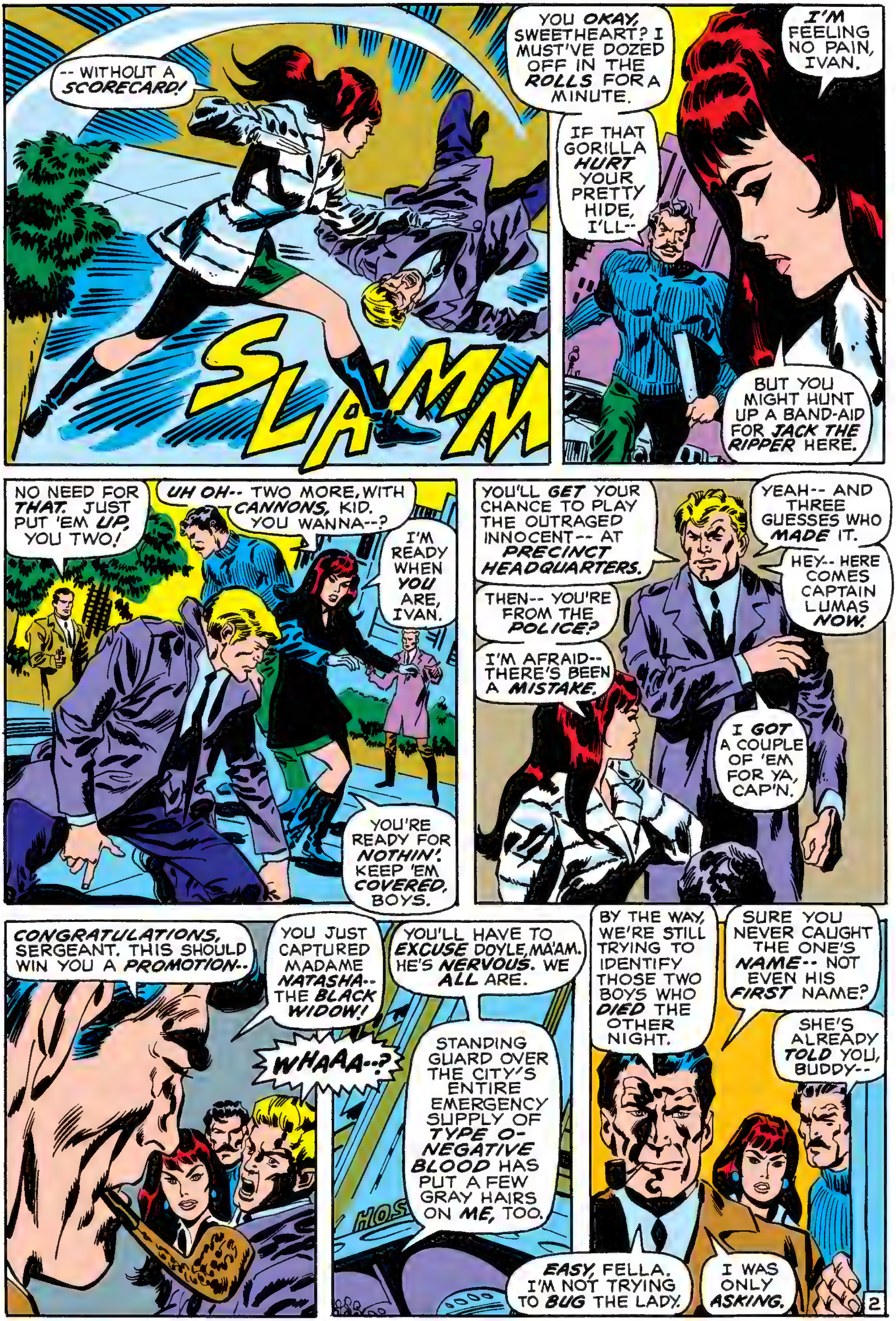
THE BLACK WIDOW!™

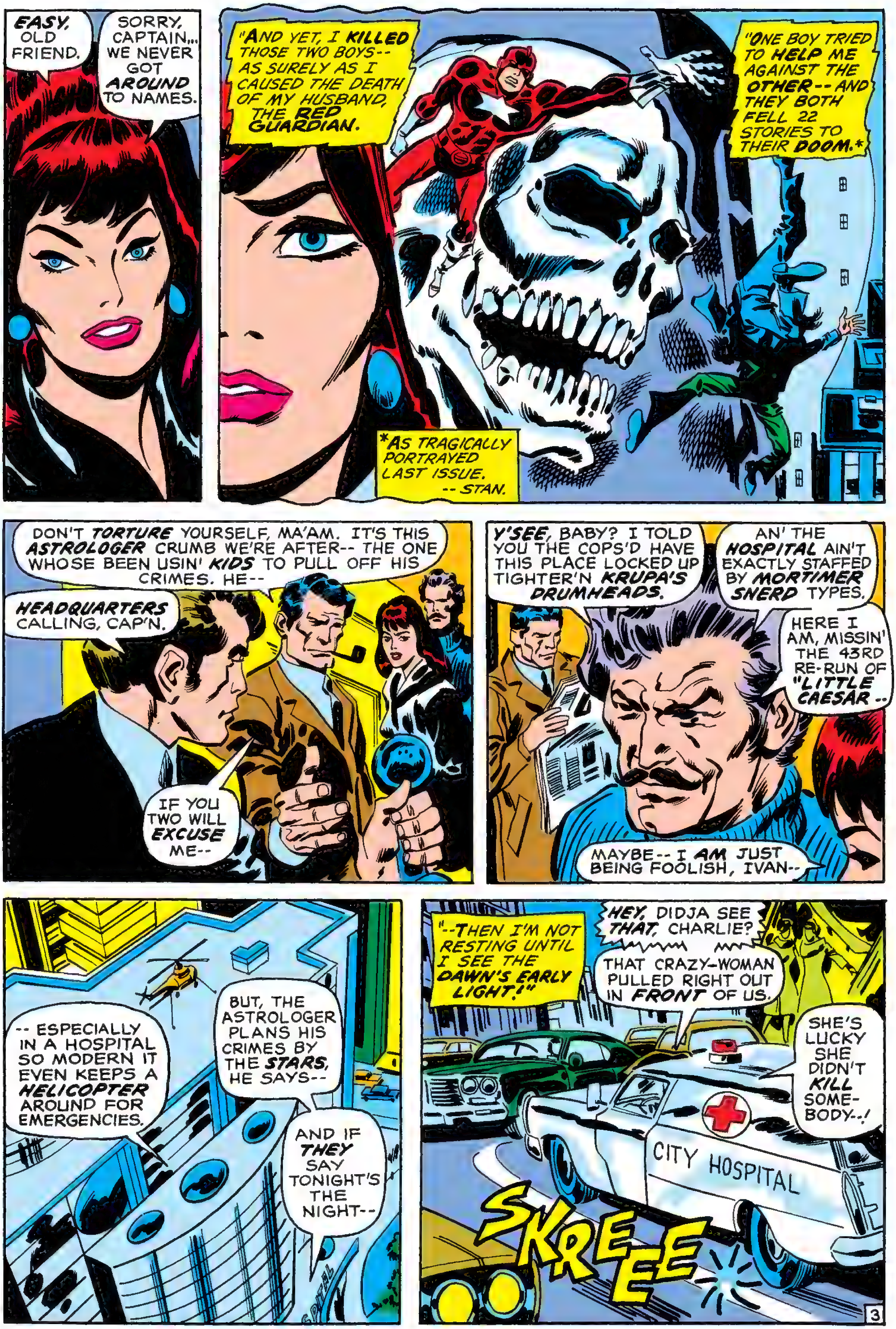

CITY
HOSPIT

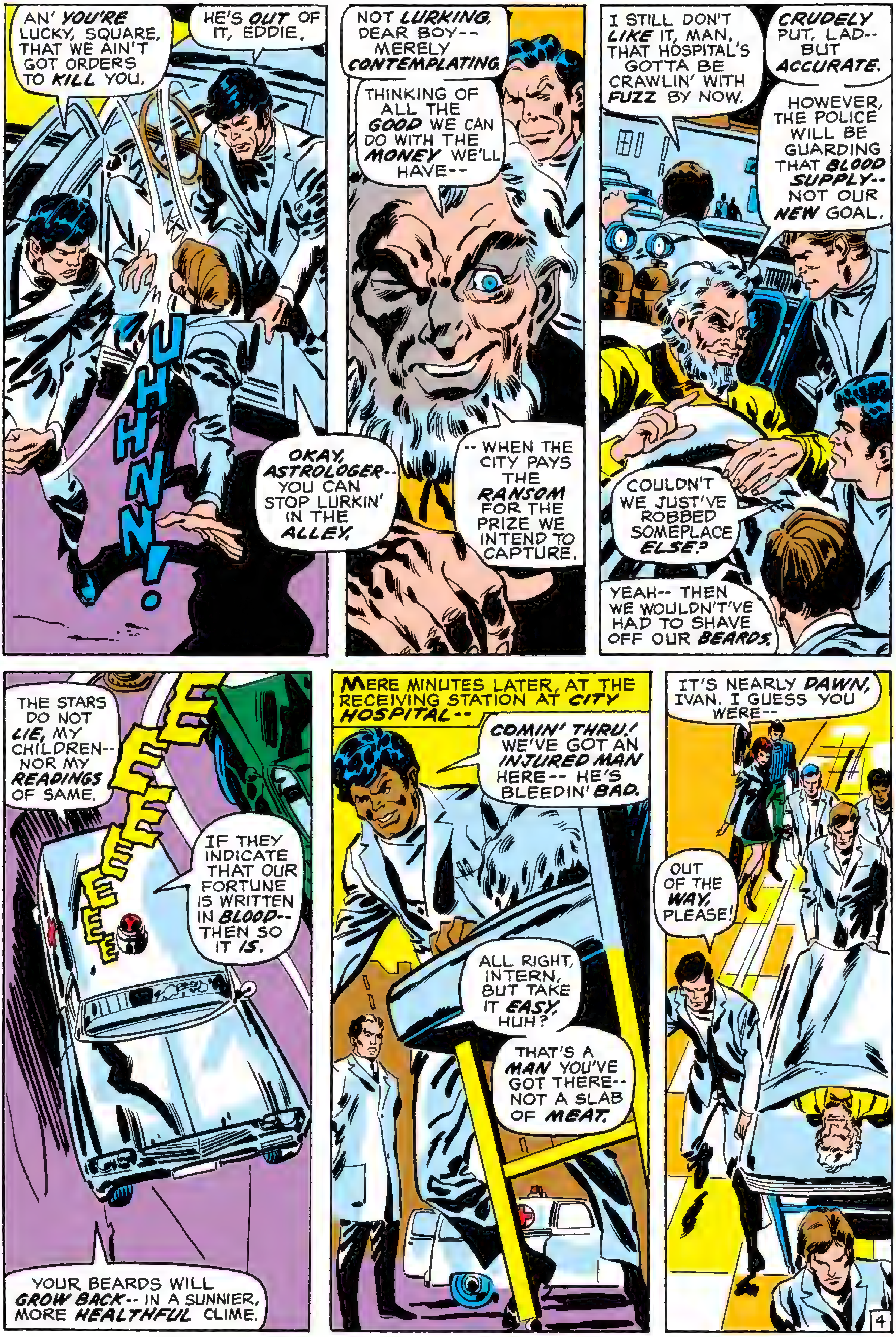
BLOOD WILL TELL!

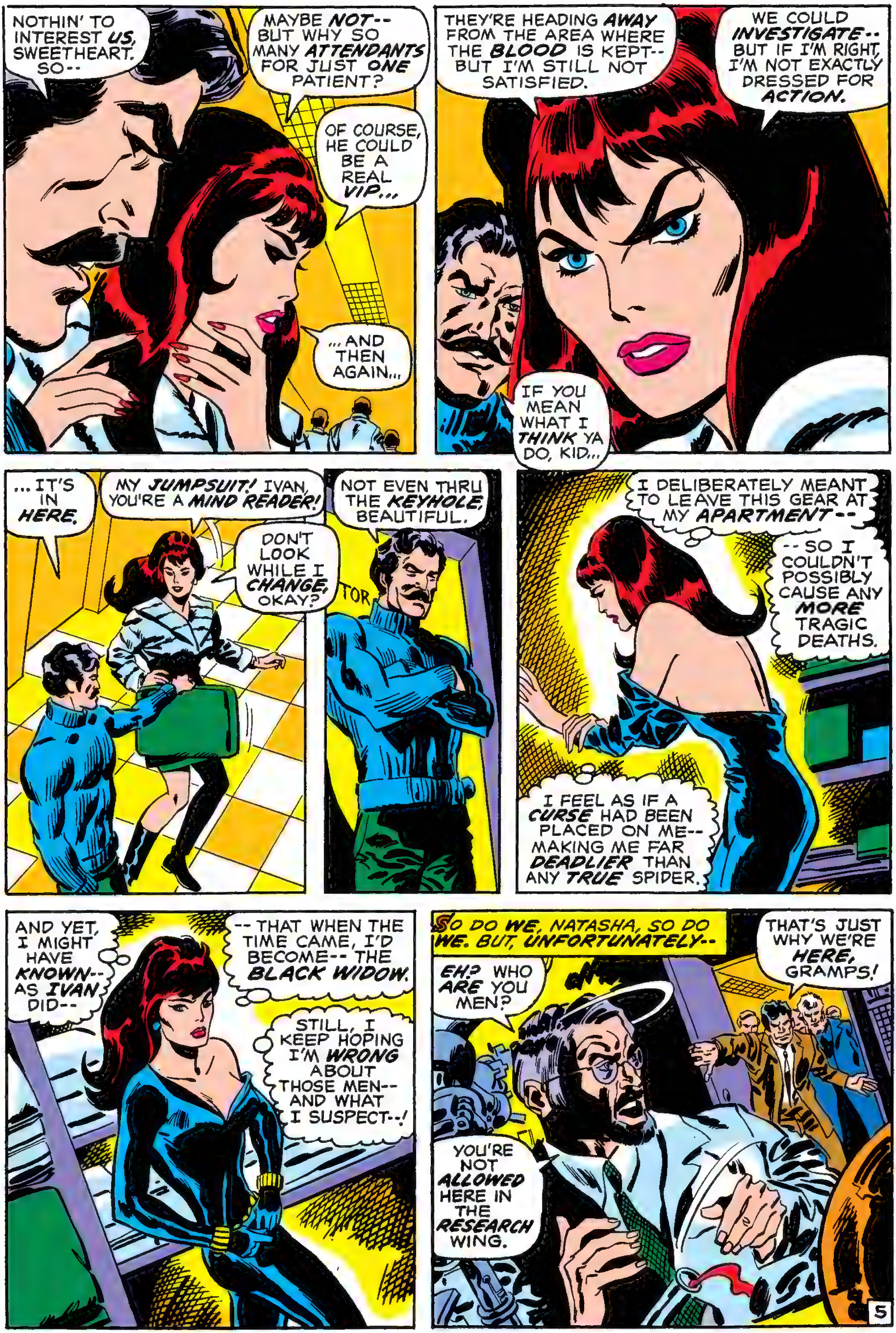
STAN LEE EDITOR
ROY THOMAS WRITER
DON HECK and **SAL BUSCEMA** ARTISTS
JEAN IZZO LETTERER

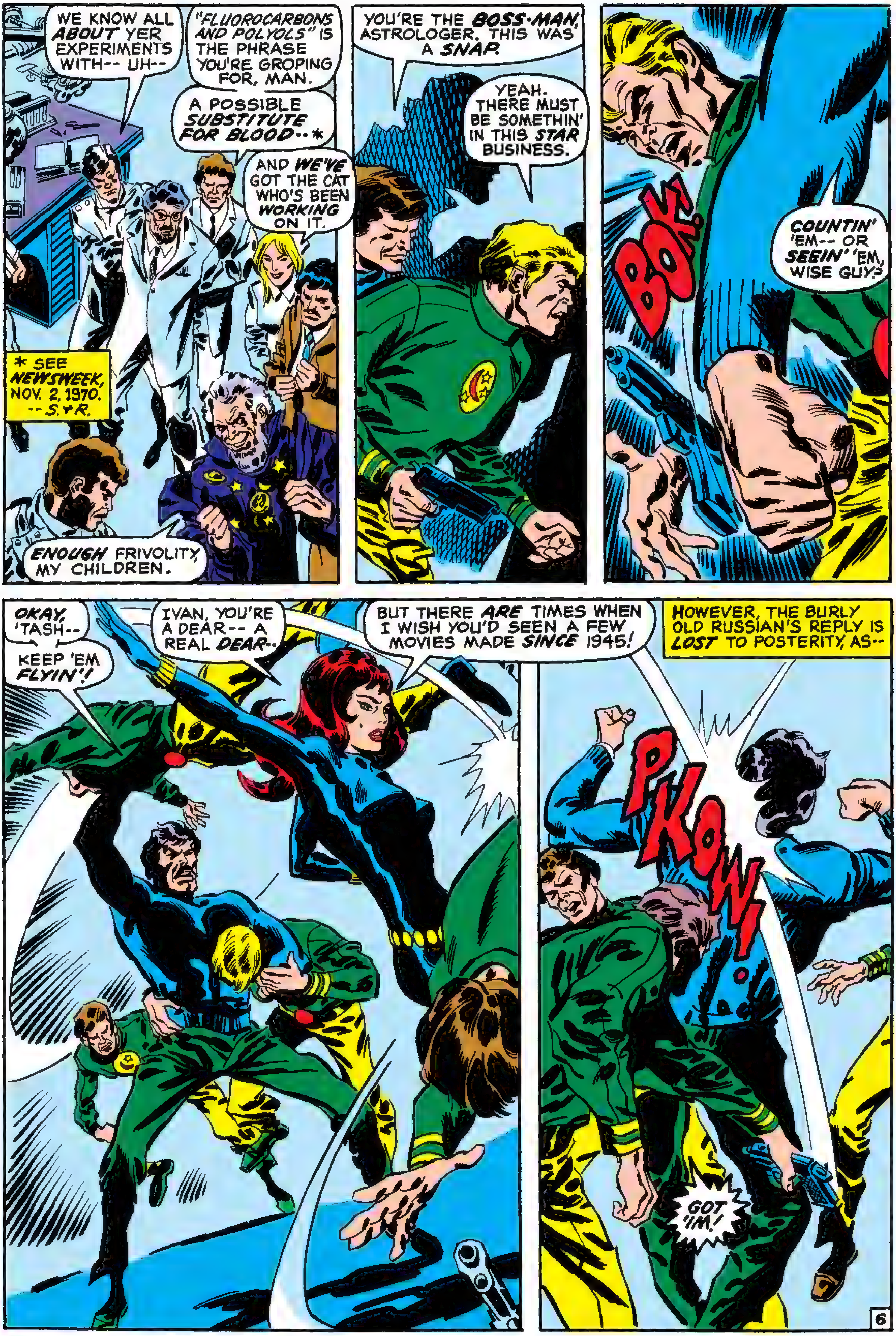

ONE THING THEY SHOULD HAVE *WARNED* YOU ABOUT AT *MUGGERS' SCHOOL,* MELVIN.
IN THESE DAYS OF *WOMEN'S LIB,* SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO TELL *MUGGER* FROM *MUGGEE*--
YEEEOWW

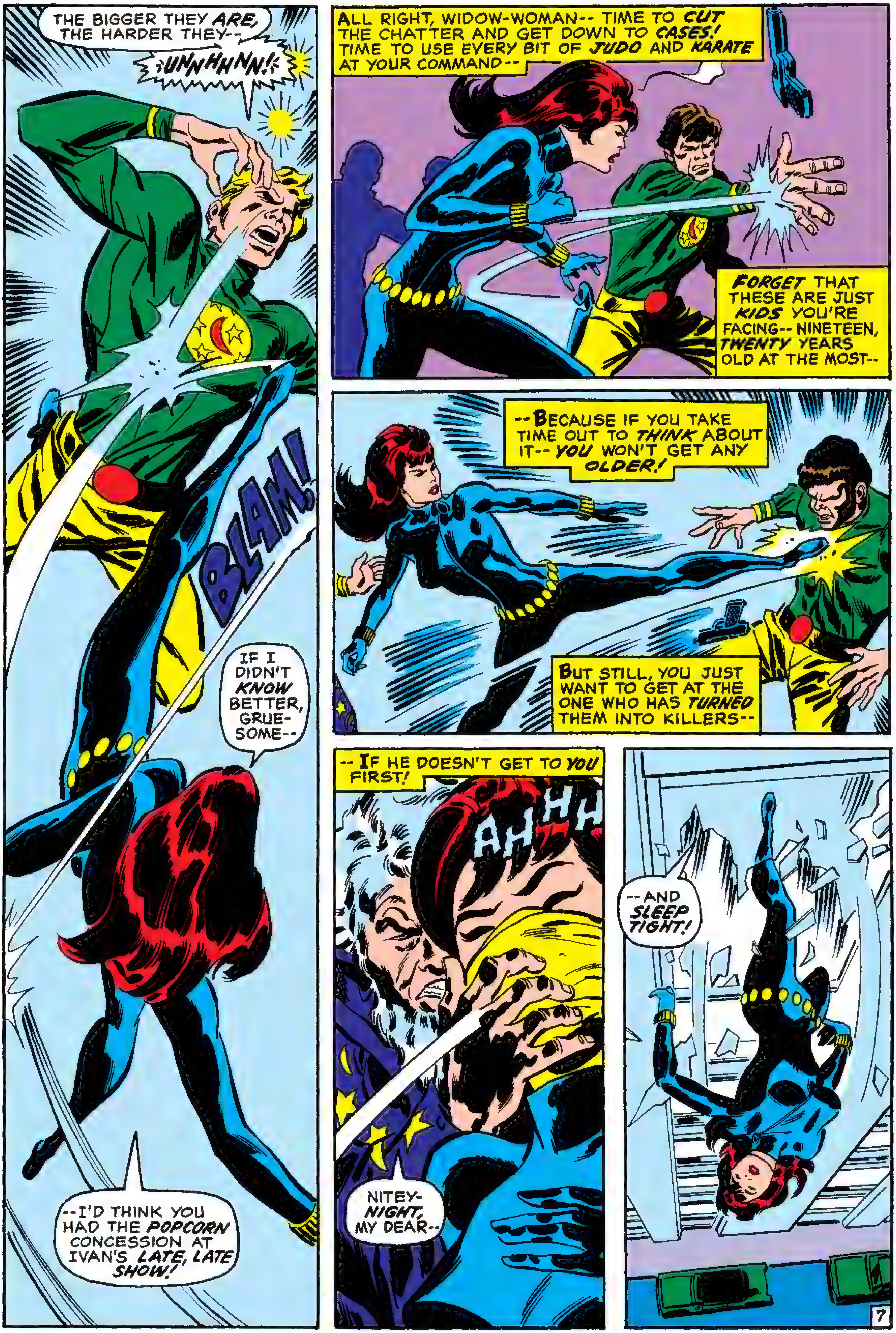

-- WITHOUT A SCORECARD!
SLAMM
YOU OKAY, SWEETHEART? I MUST'VE DOZED OFF IN THE ROLLS FOR A MINUTE.
I'M FEELING NO PAIN, IVAN.
IF THAT GORILLA HURT YOUR PRETTY HIDE, I'LL--
BUT YOU MIGHT HUNT UP A BAND-AID FOR JACK THE RIPPER HERE.
NO NEED FOR THAT. JUST PUT 'EM UP, YOU TWO!
UH OH-- TWO MORE, WITH CANNONS, KID. YOU WANNA--?
I'M READY WHEN YOU ARE, IVAN.
YOU'RE READY FOR NOTHIN'! KEEP 'EM COVERED, BOYS.
YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE TO PLAY THE OUTRAGED INNOCENT-- AT PRECINCT HEADQUARTERS.
THEN-- YOU'RE FROM THE POLICE?
I'M AFRAID-- THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE.
YEAH-- AND THREE GUESSES WHO MADE IT.
HEY-- HERE COMES CAPTAIN LUMAS NOW.
I GOT A COUPLE OF 'EM FOR YA, CAP'N.
CONGRATULATIONS, SERGEANT. THIS SHOULD WIN YOU A PROMOTION--
YOU JUST CAPTURED MADAME NATASHA-- THE BLACK WIDOW!
WHAAA--?
YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE DOYLE, MA'AM. HE'S NERVOUS. WE ALL ARE.
STANDING GUARD OVER THE CITY'S ENTIRE EMERGENCY SUPPLY OF TYPE O-NEGATIVE BLOOD HAS PUT A FEW GRAY HAIRS ON ME, TOO.
HOS
EASY, FELLA. I'M NOT TRYING TO BUG THE LADY.
BY THE WAY, WE'RE STILL TRYING TO IDENTIFY THOSE TWO BOYS WHO DIED THE OTHER NIGHT.
SURE YOU NEVER CAUGHT THE ONE'S NAME-- NOT EVEN HIS FIRST NAME?
SHE'S ALREADY TOLD YOU, BUDDY--
I WAS ONLY ASKING.

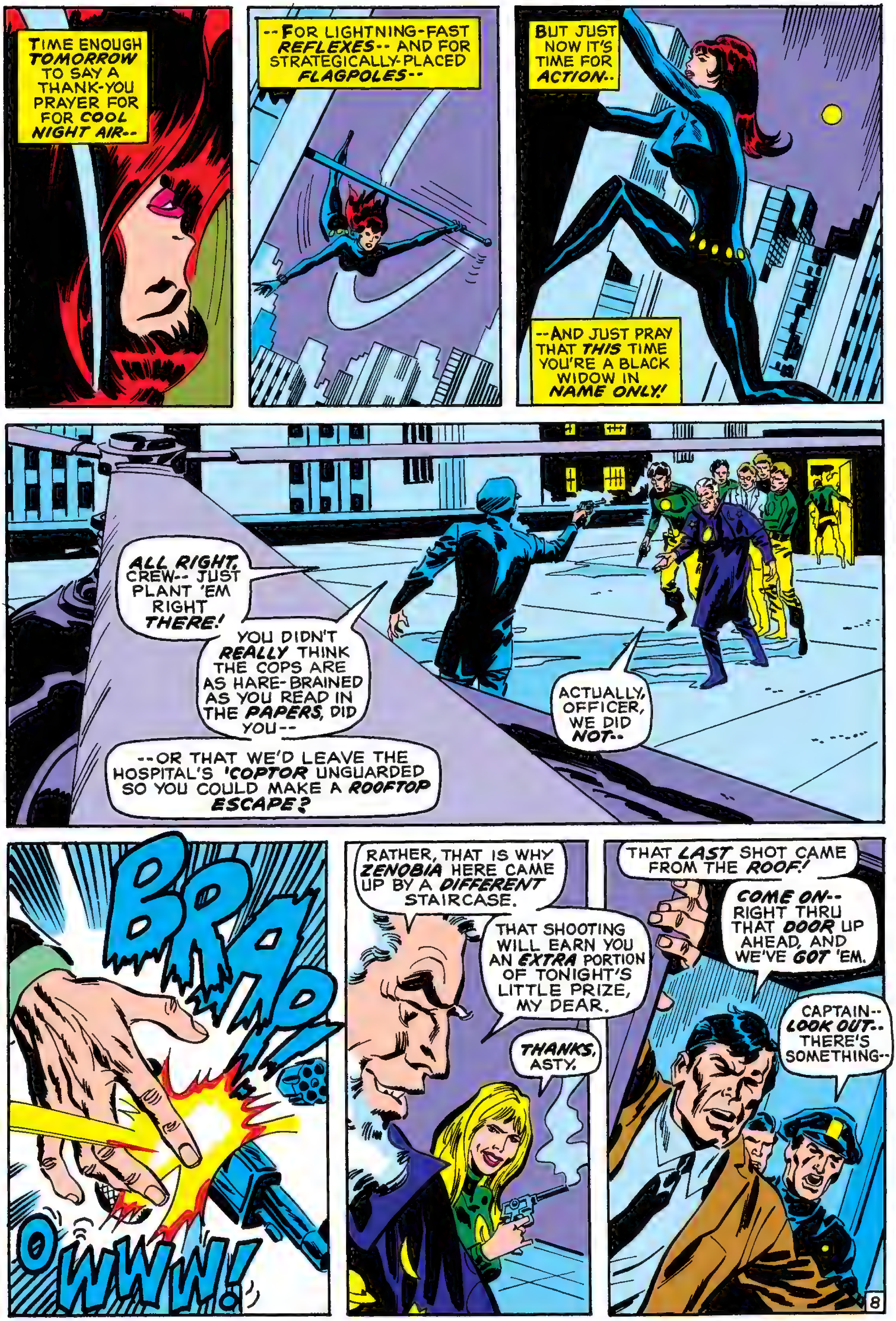

EASY, OLD FRIEND.
SORRY, CAPTAIN... WE NEVER GOT AROUND TO NAMES.
"AND YET, I KILLED THOSE TWO BOYS-- AS SURELY AS I CAUSED THE DEATH OF MY HUSBAND, THE RED GUARDIAN.
"ONE BOY TRIED TO HELP ME AGAINST THE OTHER-- AND THEY BOTH FELL 22 STORIES TO THEIR DOOM.*
*AS TRAGICALLY PORTRAYED LAST ISSUE. -- STAN.
DON'T TORTURE YOURSELF, MA'AM. IT'S THIS ASTROLOGER CRUMB WE'RE AFTER-- THE ONE WHOSE BEEN USIN' KIDS TO PULL OFF HIS CRIMES. HE--
HEADQUARTERS CALLING, CAP'N.
IF YOU TWO WILL EXCUSE ME--
Y'SEE, BABY? I TOLD YOU THE COPS'D HAVE THIS PLACE LOCKED UP TIGHTER'N KRUPA'S DRUMHEADS.
AN' THE HOSPITAL AIN'T EXACTLY STAFFED BY MORTIMER SNERD TYPES.
HERE I AM, MISSIN' THE 43RD RE-RUN OF "LITTLE CAESAR"--
MAYBE-- I AM JUST BEING FOOLISH, IVAN--
-- ESPECIALLY IN A HOSPITAL SO MODERN IT EVEN KEEPS A HELICOPTER AROUND FOR EMERGENCIES.
BUT, THE ASTROLOGER PLANS HIS CRIMES BY THE STARS, HE SAYS--
AND IF THEY SAY TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT--
"--THEN I'M NOT RESTING UNTIL I SEE THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT!"
HEY, DIDJA SEE THAT, CHARLIE?
THAT CRAZY-WOMAN PULLED RIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF US.
SHE'S LUCKY SHE DIDN'T KILL SOME-BODY..!
CITY HOSPITAL
SKREEEE

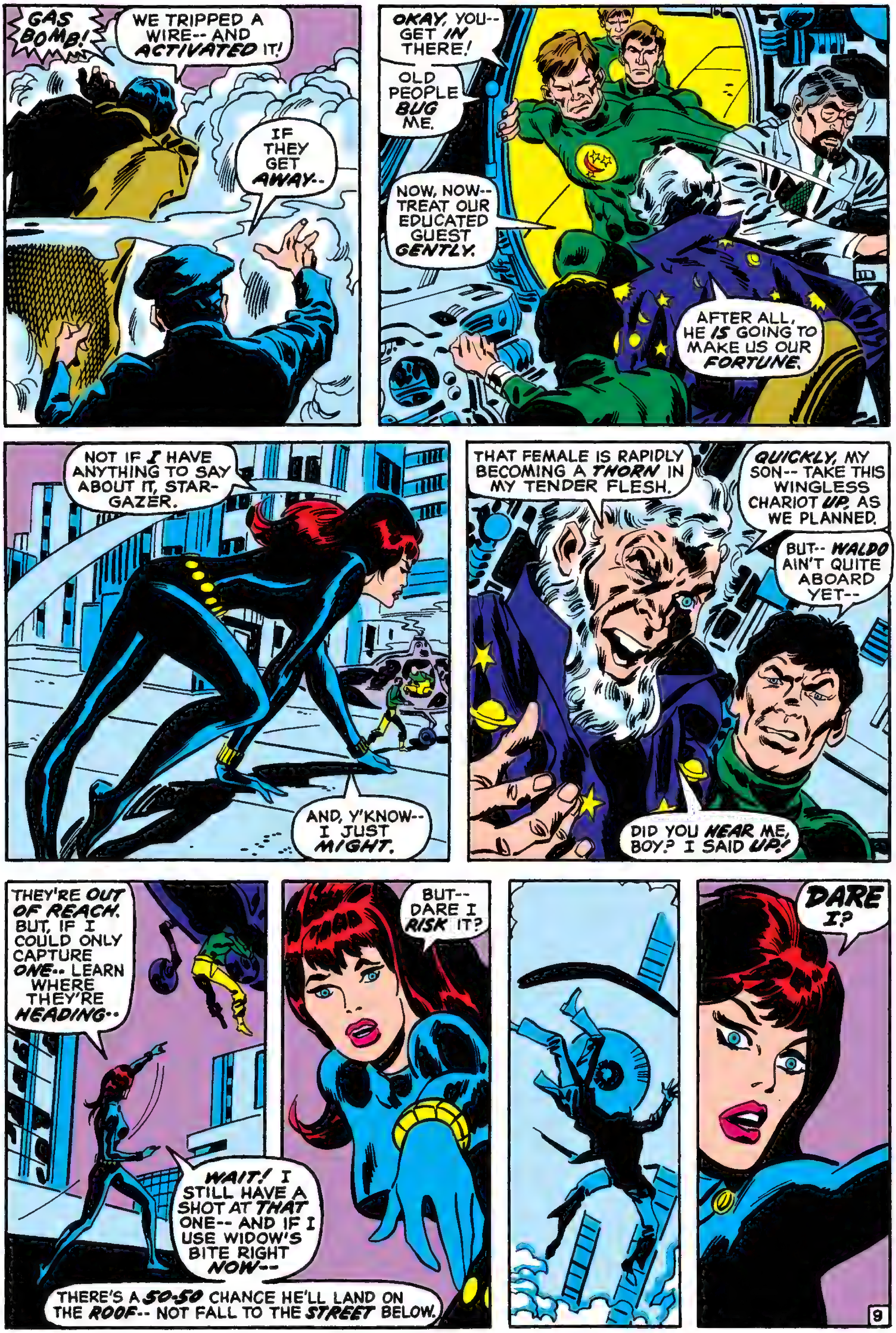

AN' **YOU'RE** LUCKY, SQUARE, THAT WE AIN'T GOT ORDERS TO **KILL** YOU.
HE'S **OUT** OF IT, EDDIE.
UHHNN!
OKAY, ASTROLOGER-- YOU CAN STOP LURKIN' IN THE **ALLEY.**
NOT **LURKING,** DEAR BOY-- MERELY **CONTEMPLATING.**
THINKING OF ALL THE **GOOD** WE CAN DO WITH THE **MONEY** WE'LL HAVE--
--WHEN THE CITY PAYS THE **RANSOM** FOR THE PRIZE WE INTEND TO CAPTURE.
I STILL DON'T **LIKE** IT, MAN. THAT HOSPITAL'S GOTTA BE CRAWLIN' WITH **FUZZ** BY NOW.
CRUDELY PUT, LAD-- BUT **ACCURATE.**
HOWEVER, THE POLICE WILL BE GUARDING THAT **BLOOD SUPPLY**-- NOT OUR **NEW** GOAL.
COULDN'T WE JUST'VE ROBBED SOMEPLACE **ELSE?**
YEAH-- THEN WE WOULDN'T'VE HAD TO SHAVE OFF OUR **BEARDS.**
THE STARS DO NOT **LIE,** MY CHILDREN-- NOR MY **READINGS** OF SAME.
EEEEEEEE
IF THEY INDICATE THAT OUR FORTUNE IS WRITTEN IN **BLOOD**-- THEN SO IT **IS.**
YOUR BEARDS WILL **GROW BACK**-- IN A SUNNIER, MORE **HEALTHFUL** CLIME.
MERE MINUTES LATER, AT THE RECEIVING STATION AT **CITY HOSPITAL**--
COMIN' THRU! WE'VE GOT AN **INJURED MAN** HERE-- HE'S BLEEDIN' **BAD.**
ALL RIGHT, INTERN, BUT TAKE IT **EASY,** HUH?
THAT'S A **MAN** YOU'VE GOT THERE-- NOT A SLAB OF **MEAT.**
IT'S NEARLY **DAWN,** IVAN. I GUESS YOU WERE--
OUT OF THE **WAY,** PLEASE!

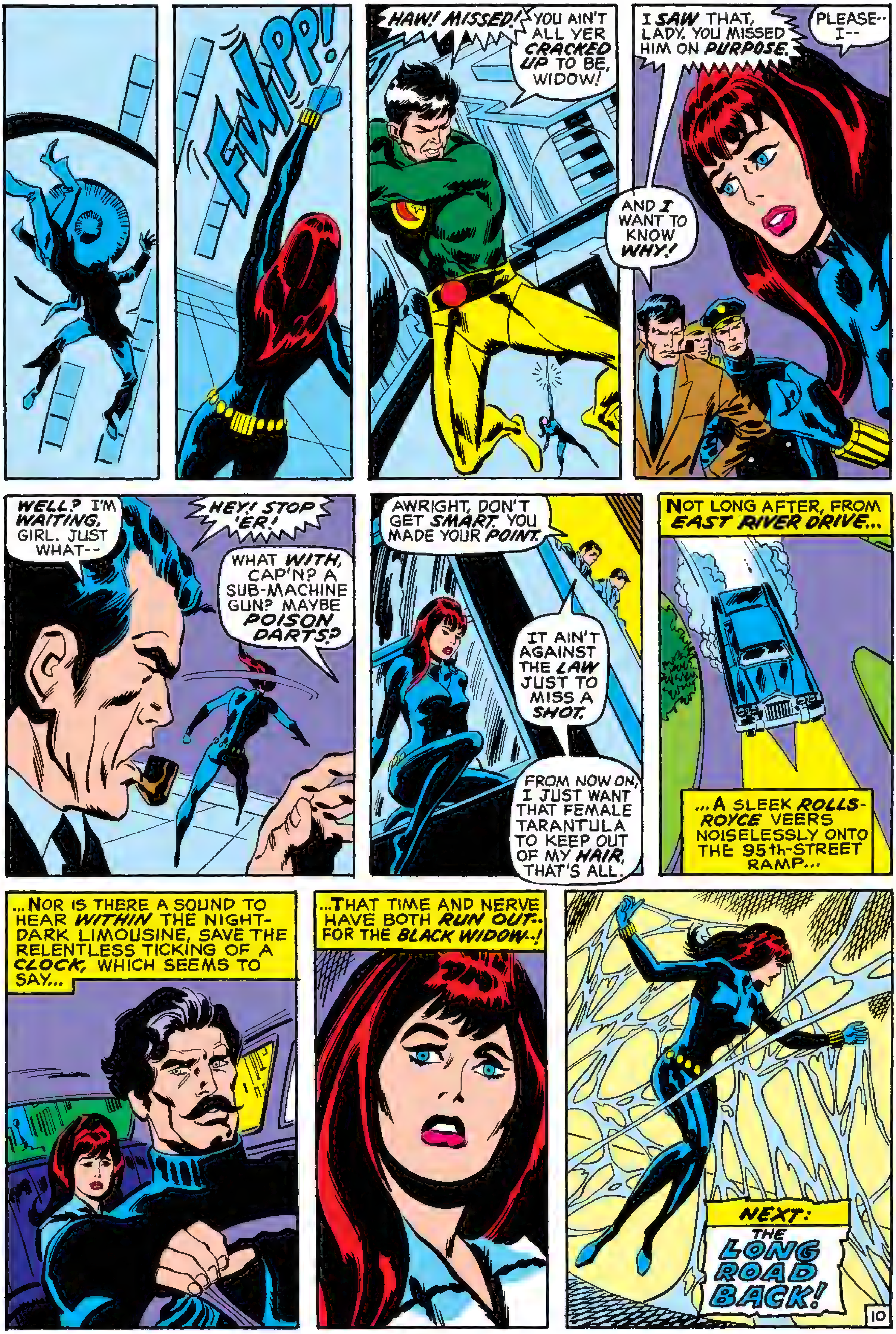

NOTHIN' TO INTEREST *US*, SWEETHEART. SO--
MAYBE *NOT*-- BUT WHY SO MANY *ATTENDANTS* FOR JUST *ONE* PATIENT?
OF COURSE, HE COULD BE A REAL *VIP*...
...AND THEN AGAIN...
THEY'RE HEADING *AWAY* FROM THE AREA WHERE THE *BLOOD* IS KEPT-- BUT I'M STILL NOT SATISFIED.
WE COULD *INVESTIGATE*-- BUT IF I'M RIGHT, I'M NOT EXACTLY DRESSED FOR *ACTION*.
IF YOU MEAN WHAT I *THINK* YA DO, KID...
...IT'S IN *HERE*.
MY *JUMPSUIT!* IVAN, YOU'RE A *MIND READER!*
DON'T LOOK WHILE I *CHANGE*, OKAY?
TOR
NOT EVEN THRU THE *KEYHOLE*, BEAUTIFUL.
I DELIBERATELY MEANT TO LEAVE THIS GEAR AT MY *APARTMENT*--
--SO I COULDN'T POSSIBLY CAUSE ANY *MORE* TRAGIC DEATHS.
I FEEL AS IF A *CURSE* HAD BEEN PLACED ON ME-- MAKING ME FAR *DEADLIER* THAN ANY *TRUE* SPIDER.
AND YET, I MIGHT HAVE *KNOWN*-- AS *IVAN* DID--
--THAT WHEN THE TIME CAME, I'D BECOME-- THE *BLACK WIDOW*.
STILL, I KEEP HOPING I'M *WRONG* ABOUT THOSE MEN-- AND WHAT I SUSPECT--!
SO DO WE, NATASHA, SO DO WE. BUT, UNFORTUNATELY--
EH? WHO *ARE* YOU MEN?
THAT'S JUST WHY WE'RE *HERE*, GRAMPS!
YOU'RE NOT *ALLOWED* HERE IN THE *RESEARCH* WING.


WE KNOW ALL ABOUT YER EXPERIMENTS WITH-- UH--
"FLUOROCARBONS AND POLYOLS" IS THE PHRASE YOU'RE GROPING FOR, MAN.
A POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTE FOR BLOOD--*
AND WE'VE GOT THE CAT WHO'S BEEN WORKING ON IT.
* SEE NEWSWEEK, NOV. 2, 1970. --S.+R.
ENOUGH FRIVOLITY, MY CHILDREN.
YOU'RE THE BOSS-MAN, ASTROLOGER. THIS WAS A SNAP.
YEAH. THERE MUST BE SOMETHIN' IN THIS STAR BUSINESS.
BOK!
COUNTIN' 'EM-- OR SEEIN' 'EM, WISE GUY?
OKAY, 'TASH--
KEEP 'EM FLYIN'!
IVAN, YOU'RE A DEAR-- A REAL DEAR--
BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I WISH YOU'D SEEN A FEW MOVIES MADE SINCE 1945!
HOWEVER, THE BURLY OLD RUSSIAN'S REPLY IS LOST TO POSTERITY, AS--
P'KOW!
GOT 'IM!


THE BIGGER THEY *ARE*, THE HARDER THEY--
¡UNNHHNN!
BLAM!
IF I DIDN'T *KNOW* BETTER, GRUESOME--
--I'D THINK YOU HAD THE *POPCORN* CONCESSION AT IVAN'S *LATE, LATE SHOW!*
ALL RIGHT, WIDOW-WOMAN-- TIME TO *CUT* THE CHATTER AND GET DOWN TO *CASES!* TIME TO USE EVERY BIT OF *JUDO* AND *KARATE* AT YOUR COMMAND--
FORGET THAT THESE ARE JUST *KIDS* YOU'RE FACING-- NINETEEN, *TWENTY* YEARS OLD AT THE MOST--
--BECAUSE IF YOU TAKE TIME OUT TO *THINK* ABOUT IT-- *YOU* WON'T GET ANY *OLDER!*
BUT STILL, YOU JUST WANT TO GET AT THE ONE WHO HAS *TURNED* THEM INTO KILLERS--
--IF HE DOESN'T GET TO *YOU* FIRST!
AHHH
NITEY-*NIGHT*, MY DEAR--
--AND *SLEEP TIGHT!*

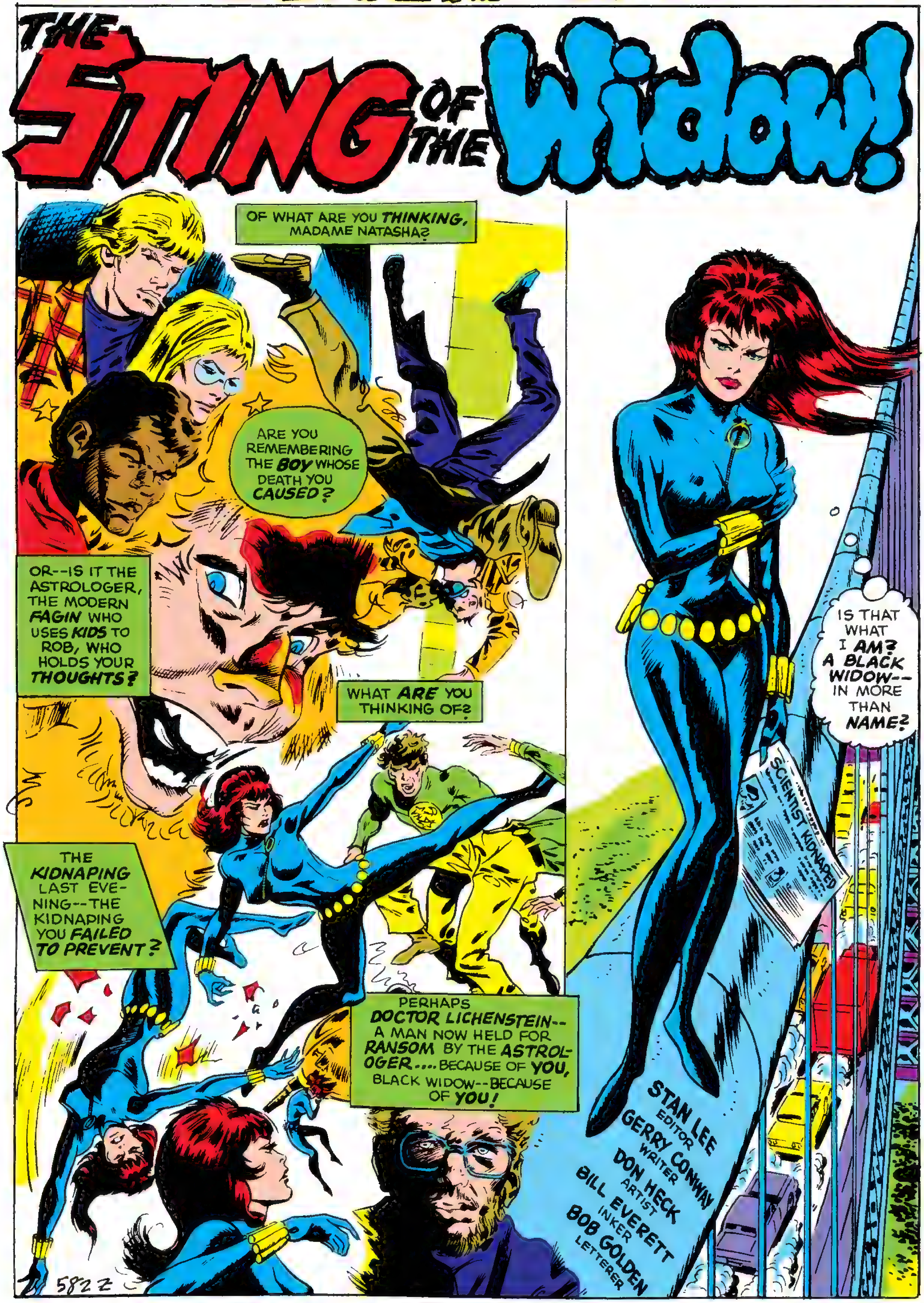

TIME ENOUGH TOMORROW TO SAY A THANK-YOU PRAYER FOR FOR COOL NIGHT AIR--
--FOR LIGHTNING-FAST REFLEXES-- AND FOR STRATEGICALLY-PLACED FLAGPOLES--
BUT JUST NOW IT'S TIME FOR ACTION..
--AND JUST PRAY THAT THIS TIME YOU'RE A BLACK WIDOW IN NAME ONLY!
ALL RIGHT, CREW-- JUST PLANT 'EM RIGHT THERE!
YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK THE COPS ARE AS HARE-BRAINED AS YOU READ IN THE PAPERS, DID YOU--
--OR THAT WE'D LEAVE THE HOSPITAL'S 'COPTOR UNGUARDED SO YOU COULD MAKE A ROOFTOP ESCAPE?
ACTUALLY, OFFICER, WE DID NOT--
BRAP!
OWWW!
RATHER, THAT IS WHY ZENOBIA HERE CAME UP BY A DIFFERENT STAIRCASE.
THAT SHOOTING WILL EARN YOU AN EXTRA PORTION OF TONIGHT'S LITTLE PRIZE, MY DEAR.
THANKS, ASTY.
THAT LAST SHOT CAME FROM THE ROOF!
COME ON-- RIGHT THRU THAT DOOR UP AHEAD, AND WE'VE GOT 'EM.
CAPTAIN-- LOOK OUT-- THERE'S SOMETHING--


GAS BOMB!
WE TRIPPED A WIRE-- AND *ACTIVATED* IT!
IF THEY GET *AWAY*--
OKAY, YOU-- GET *IN* THERE!
OLD PEOPLE *BUG* ME.
NOW, NOW-- TREAT OUR EDUCATED GUEST *GENTLY*.
AFTER ALL, HE *IS* GOING TO MAKE US OUR *FORTUNE*.
NOT IF *I* HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT, STAR-GAZER.
AND, Y'KNOW-- I JUST *MIGHT*.
THAT FEMALE IS RAPIDLY BECOMING A *THORN* IN MY TENDER FLESH.
QUICKLY, MY SON-- TAKE THIS WINGLESS CHARIOT *UP*, AS WE PLANNED.
BUT-- *WALDO* AIN'T QUITE ABOARD YET--
DID YOU *HEAR* ME, BOY? I SAID *UP!*
THEY'RE *OUT OF REACH*. BUT, IF I COULD ONLY CAPTURE *ONE*-- LEARN WHERE THEY'RE *HEADING*--
WAIT! I STILL HAVE A SHOT AT *THAT* ONE-- AND IF I USE WIDOW'S BITE RIGHT *NOW*--
THERE'S A *50-50* CHANCE HE'LL LAND ON THE *ROOF*-- NOT FALL TO THE *STREET* BELOW.
BUT-- DARE I *RISK* IT?
DARE I?


FWIPP!
HAW! MISSED!
YOU AIN'T ALL YER CRACKED UP TO BE, WIDOW!
I SAW THAT, LADY. YOU MISSED HIM ON PURPOSE.
PLEASE-- I--
AND I WANT TO KNOW WHY!
WELL? I'M WAITING, GIRL. JUST WHAT--
HEY! STOP 'ER!
WHAT WITH, CAP'N? A SUB-MACHINE GUN? MAYBE POISON DARTS?
AWRIGHT, DON'T GET SMART. YOU MADE YOUR POINT.
IT AIN'T AGAINST THE LAW JUST TO MISS A SHOT.
FROM NOW ON, I JUST WANT THAT FEMALE TARANTULA TO KEEP OUT OF MY HAIR, THAT'S ALL.
NOT LONG AFTER, FROM EAST RIVER DRIVE...
...A SLEEK ROLLS-ROYCE VEERS NOISELESSLY ONTO THE 95th-STREET RAMP...
...NOR IS THERE A SOUND TO HEAR WITHIN THE NIGHT-DARK LIMOUSINE, SAVE THE RELENTLESS TICKING OF A CLOCK, WHICH SEEMS TO SAY...
...THAT TIME AND NERVE HAVE BOTH RUN OUT-- FOR THE BLACK WIDOW--!
NEXT: THE LONG ROAD BACK!

AMAZING ADVENTURES
15¢
7
JULY
02487
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
AMAZING ADVENTURES
FEATURING
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BURN, BLACK BOLT.. BURN!
PLUS: A BLOCK-BUSTING BONUS!
THE WIDOW WRAPS IT UP!!

THE BLACK WIDOW!™


THE STING OF THE WIDOW!
OF WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, MADAME NATASHA?
ARE YOU REMEMBERING THE BOY WHOSE DEATH YOU CAUSED?
OR--IS IT THE ASTROLOGER, THE MODERN FAGIN WHO USES KIDS TO ROB, WHO HOLDS YOUR THOUGHTS?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF?
THE KIDNAPING LAST EVENING--THE KIDNAPING YOU FAILED TO PREVENT?
PERHAPS DOCTOR LICHENSTEIN--A MAN NOW HELD FOR RANSOM BY THE ASTROLOGER.... BECAUSE OF YOU, BLACK WIDOW--BECAUSE OF YOU!
IS THAT WHAT I AM? A BLACK WIDOW--IN MORE THAN NAME?
SCIENTIST KIDNAPED
STAN LEE EDITOR
GERRY CONWAY WRITER
DON HECK ARTIST
BILL EVERETT INKER
BOB GOLDEN LETTERER
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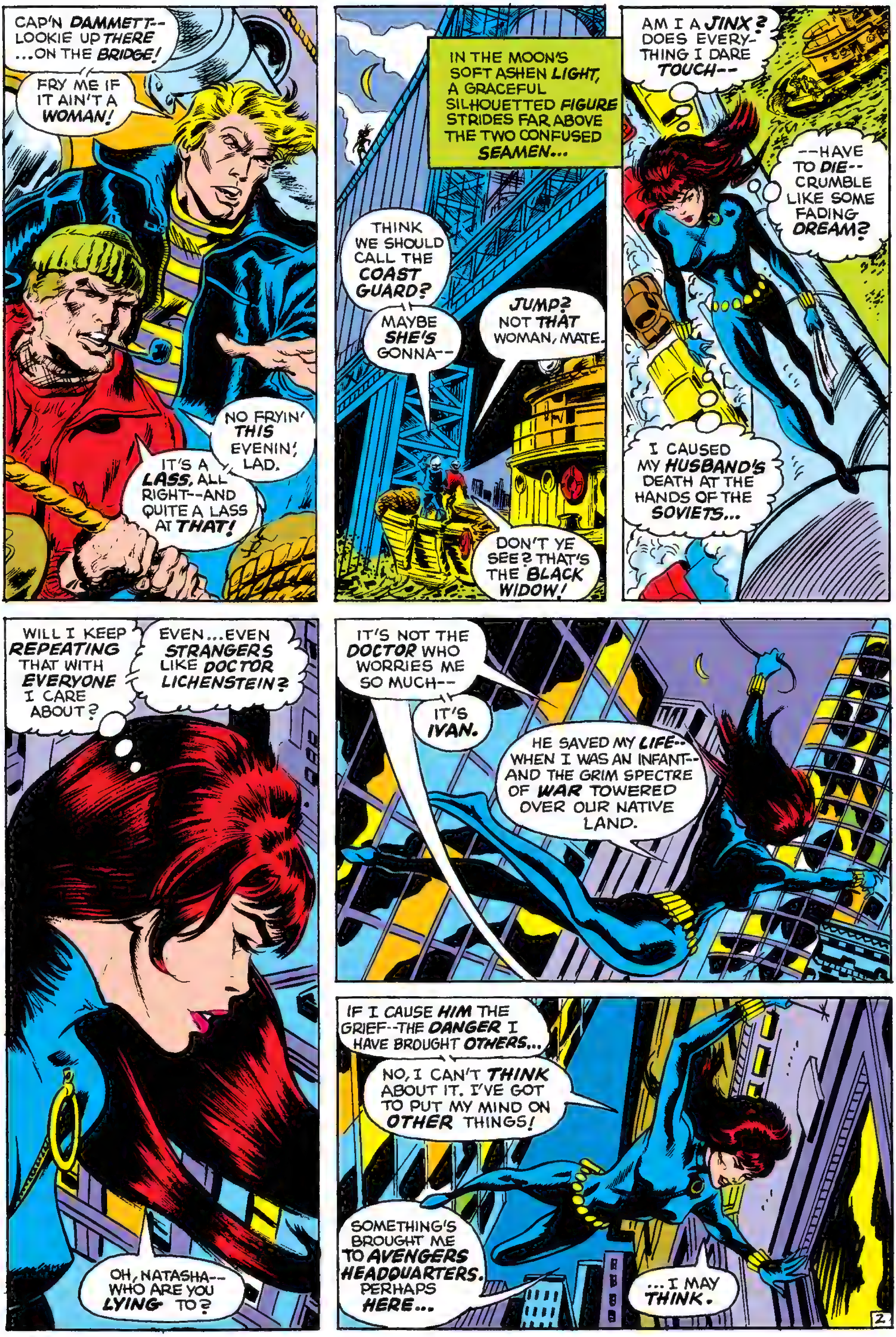
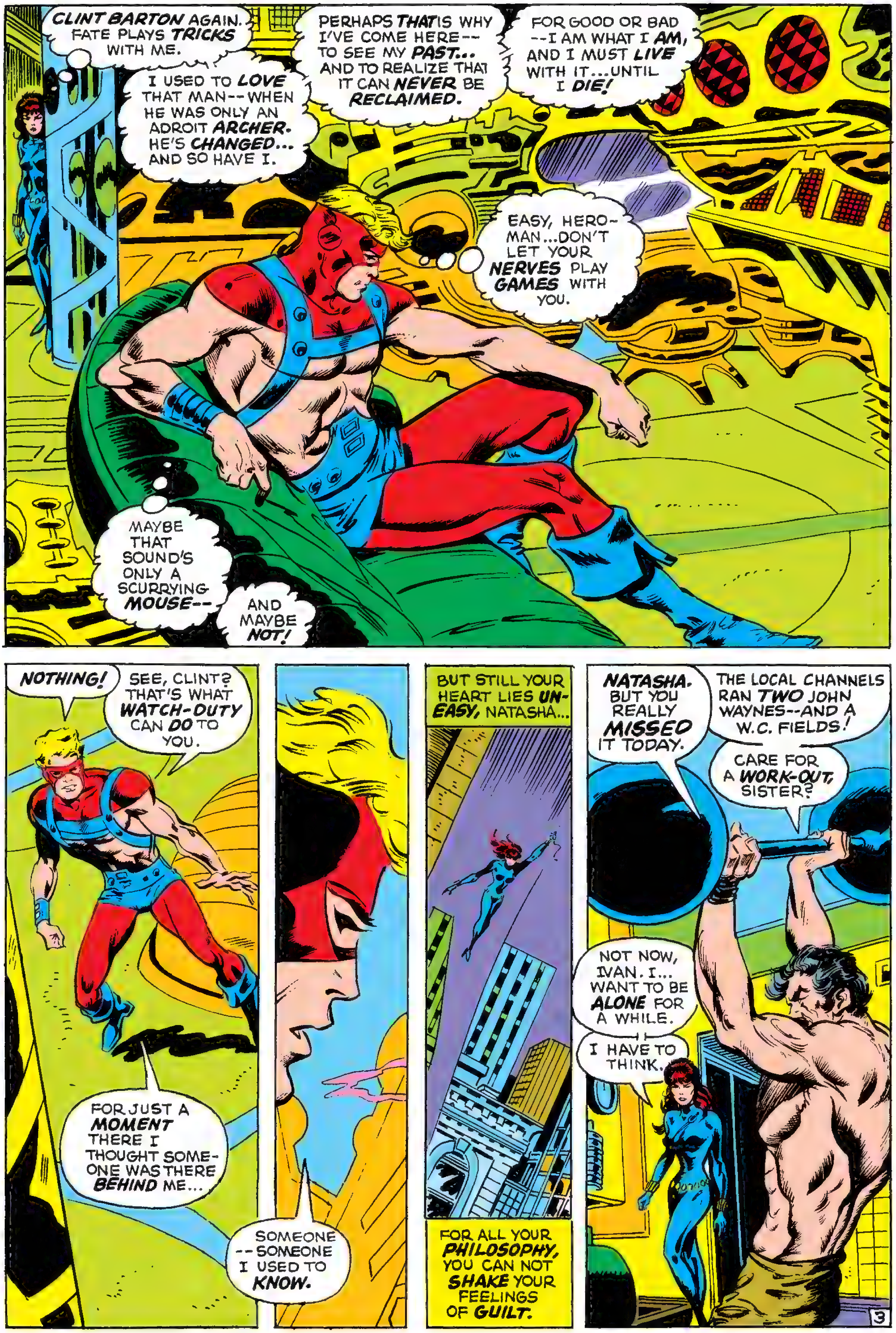
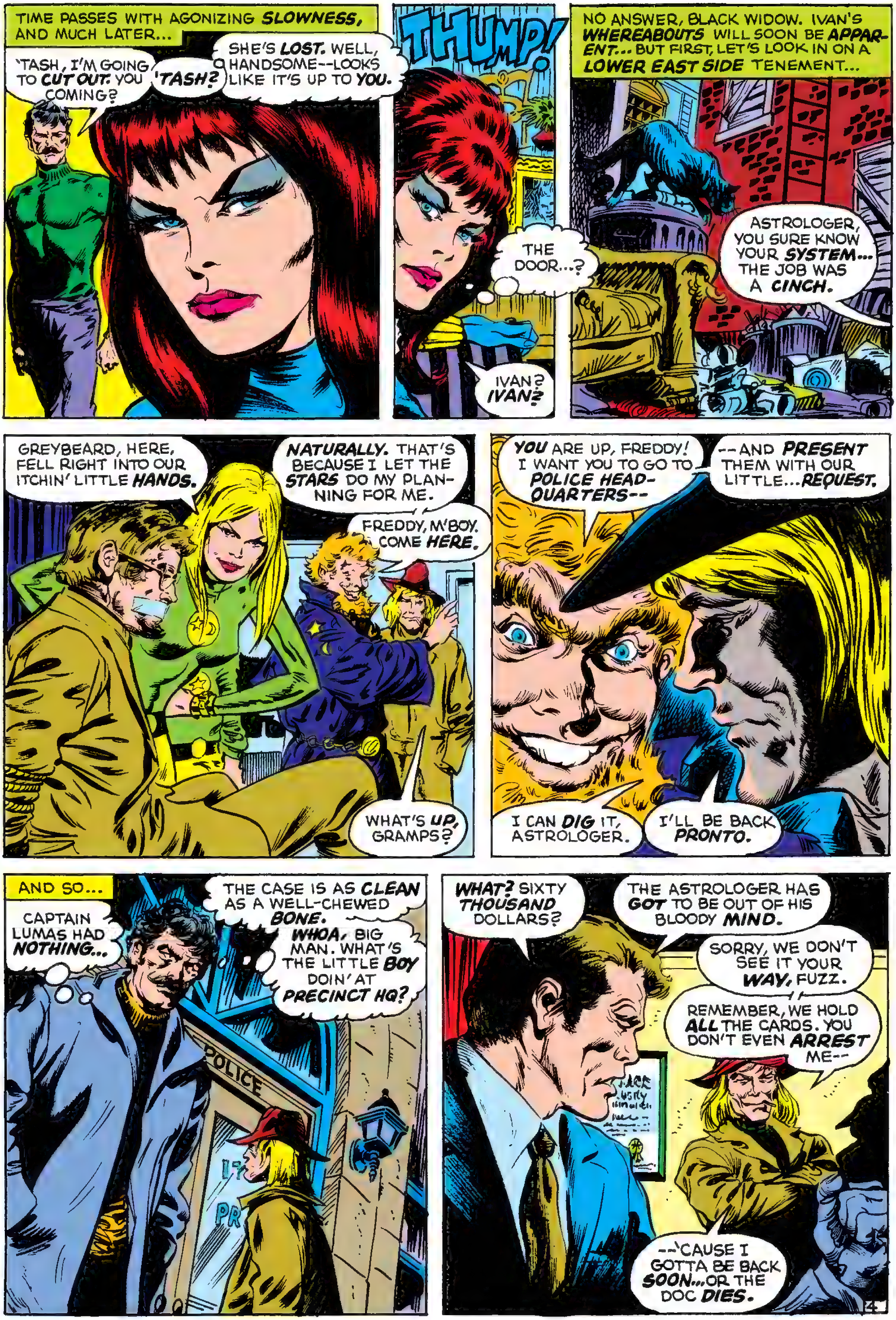
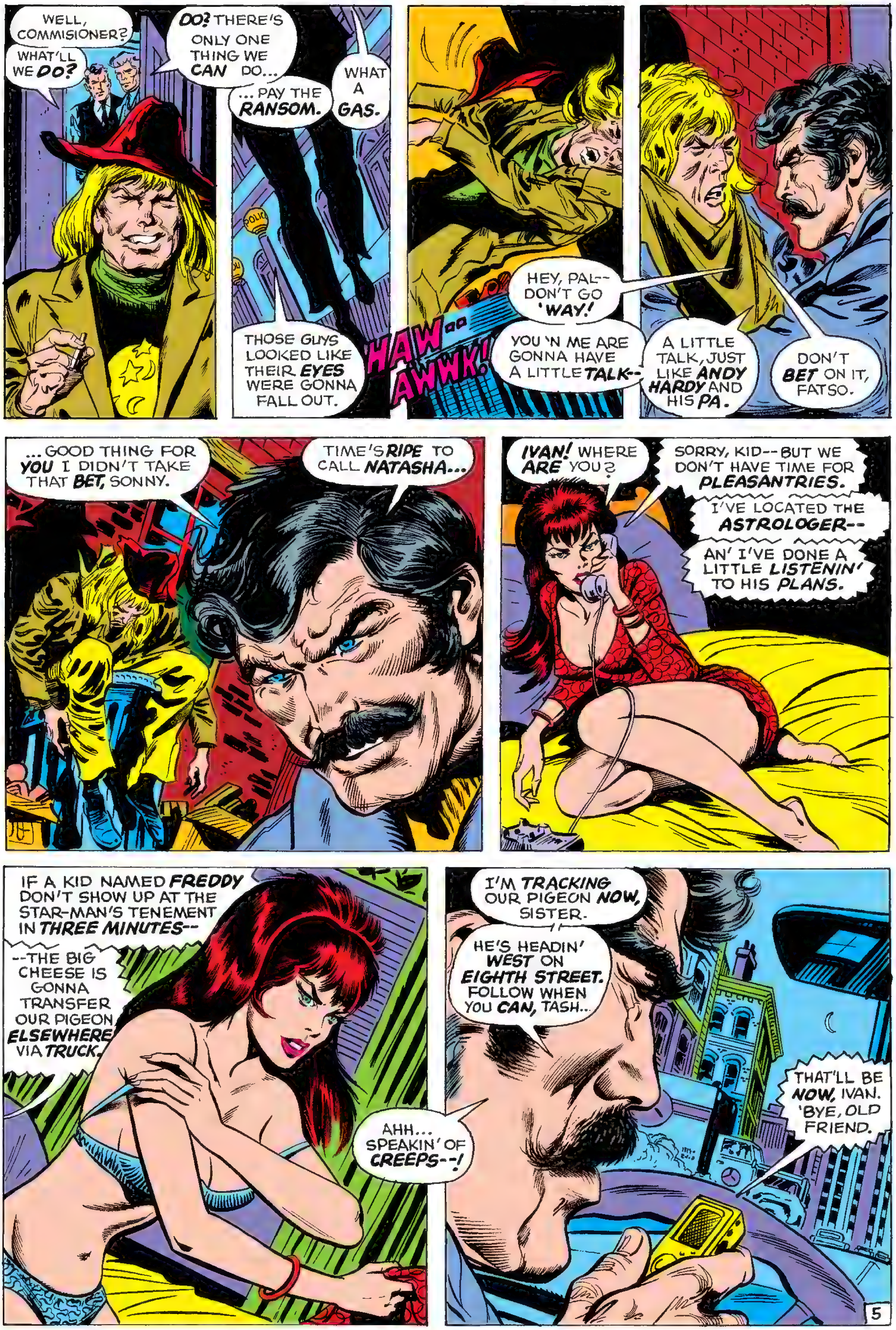
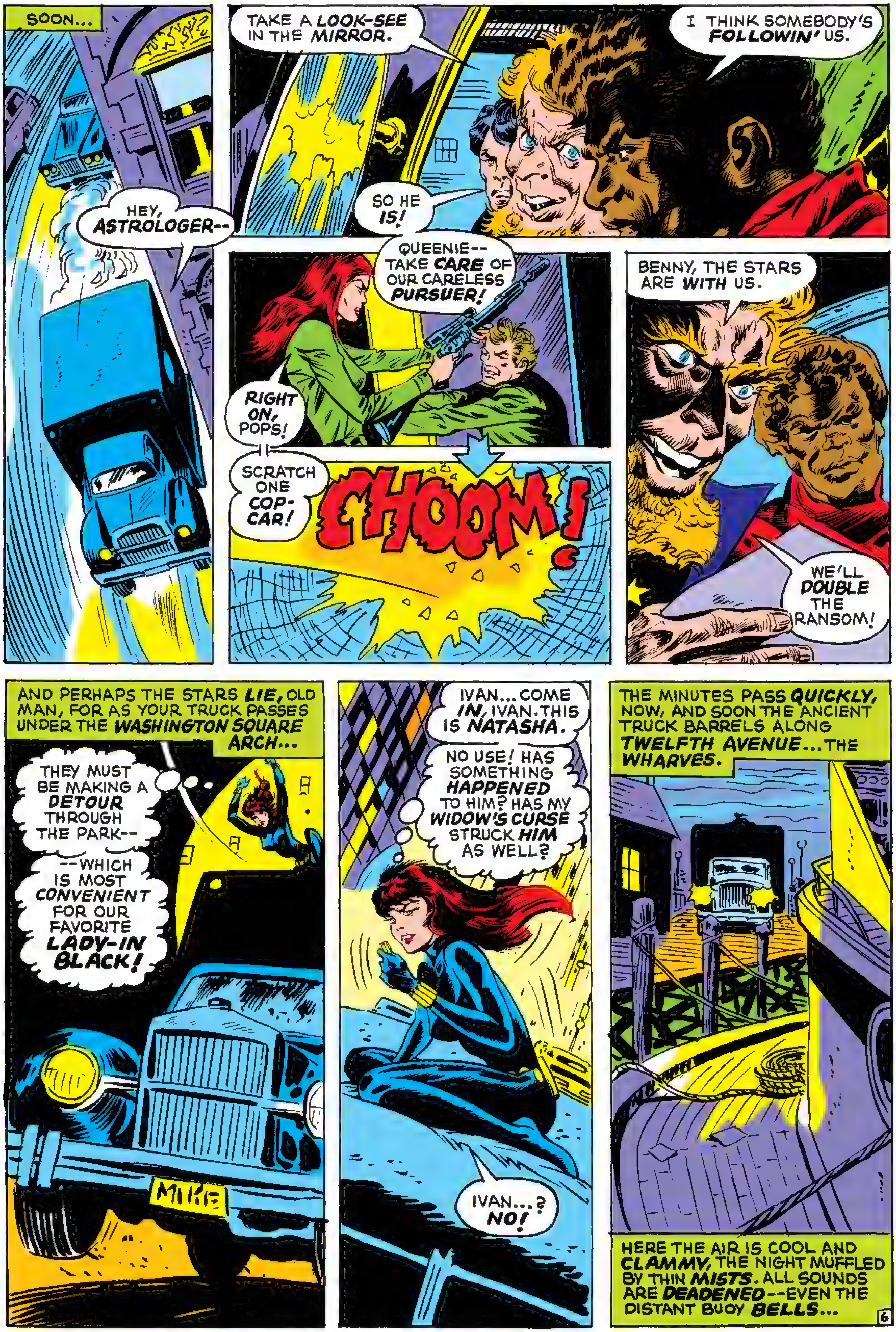
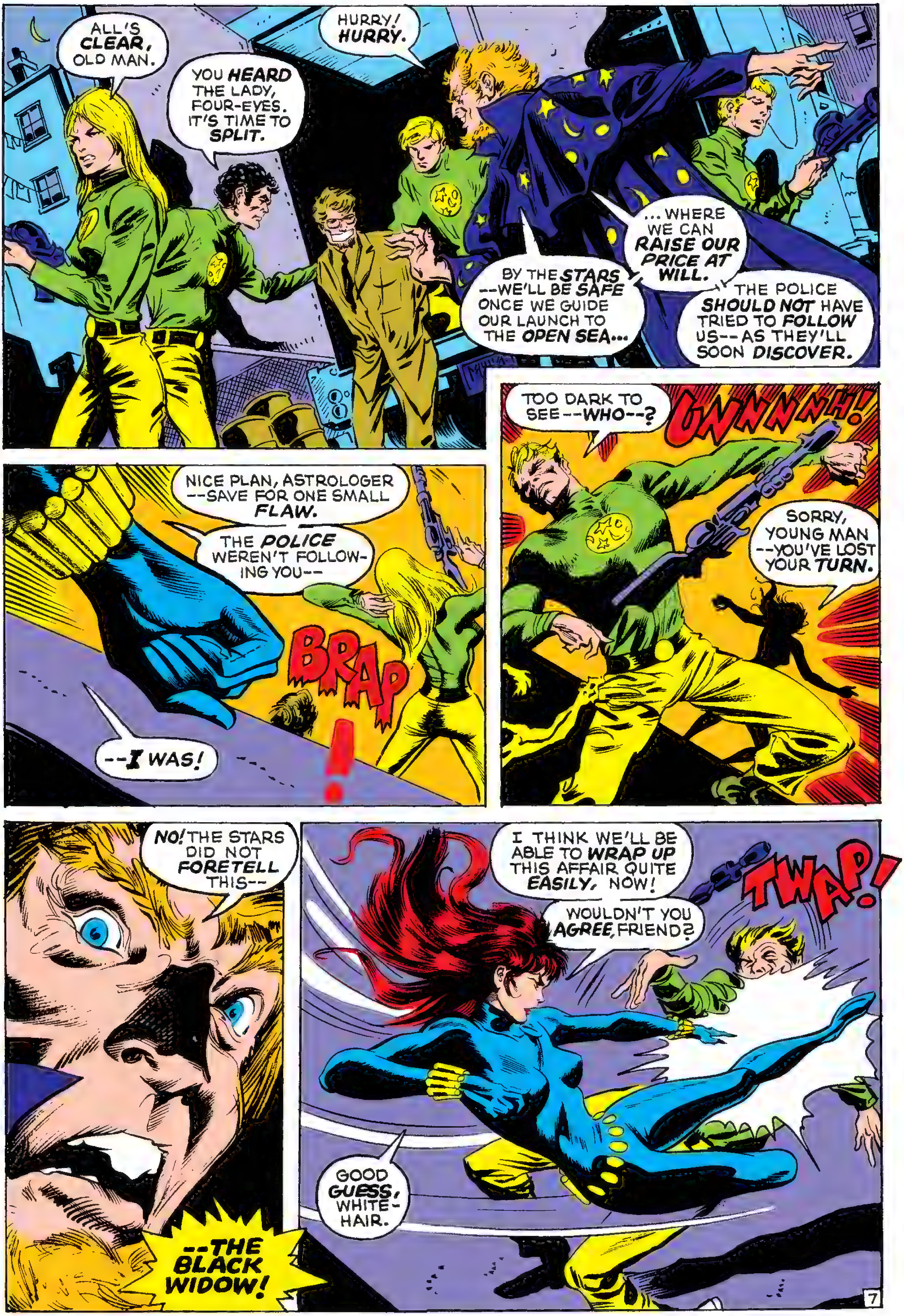

CAP'N DAMMETT--LOOKIE UP THERE ...ON THE BRIDGE!
FRY ME IF IT AIN'T A WOMAN!
NO FRYIN' THIS EVENIN', LAD.
IT'S A LASS, ALL RIGHT--AND QUITE A LASS AT THAT!
IN THE MOON'S SOFT ASHEN LIGHT, A GRACEFUL SILHOUETTED FIGURE STRIDES FAR ABOVE THE TWO CONFUSED SEAMEN...
THINK WE SHOULD CALL THE COAST GUARD?
MAYBE SHE'S GONNA--
JUMP? NOT THAT WOMAN, MATE.
DON'T YE SEE? THAT'S THE BLACK WIDOW!
AM I A JINX? DOES EVERYTHING I DARE TOUCH--
--HAVE TO DIE--CRUMBLE LIKE SOME FADING DREAM?
I CAUSED MY HUSBAND'S DEATH AT THE HANDS OF THE SOVIETS...
WILL I KEEP REPEATING THAT WITH EVERYONE I CARE ABOUT?
EVEN...EVEN STRANGERS LIKE DOCTOR LICHENSTEIN?
OH, NATASHA--WHO ARE YOU LYING TO?
IT'S NOT THE DOCTOR WHO WORRIES ME SO MUCH--
IT'S IVAN.
HE SAVED MY LIFE--WHEN I WAS AN INFANT--AND THE GRIM SPECTRE OF WAR TOWERED OVER OUR NATIVE LAND.
IF I CAUSE HIM THE GRIEF--THE DANGER I HAVE BROUGHT OTHERS...
NO, I CAN'T THINK ABOUT IT. I'VE GOT TO PUT MY MIND ON OTHER THINGS!
SOMETHING'S BROUGHT ME TO AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS. PERHAPS HERE...
...I MAY THINK.

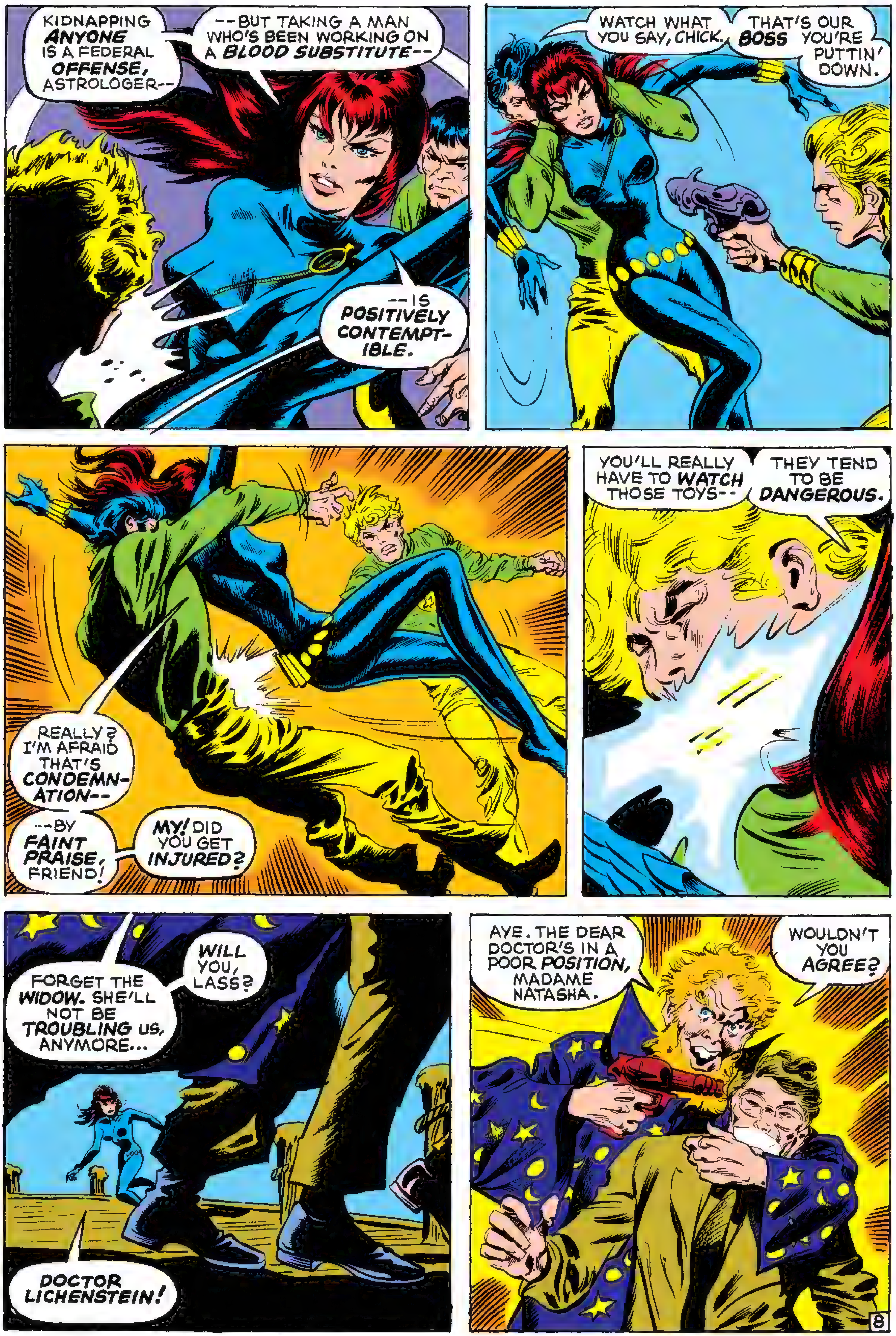

CLINT BARTON AGAIN. FATE PLAYS TRICKS WITH ME.
I USED TO LOVE THAT MAN--WHEN HE WAS ONLY AN ADROIT ARCHER. HE'S CHANGED... AND SO HAVE I.
PERHAPS THAT IS WHY I'VE COME HERE-- TO SEE MY PAST... AND TO REALIZE THAT IT CAN NEVER BE RECLAIMED.
FOR GOOD OR BAD --I AM WHAT I AM, AND I MUST LIVE WITH IT...UNTIL I DIE!
EASY, HERO-MAN...DON'T LET YOUR NERVES PLAY GAMES WITH YOU.
MAYBE THAT SOUND'S ONLY A SCURRYING MOUSE--
AND MAYBE NOT!
NOTHING!
SEE, CLINT? THAT'S WHAT WATCH-DUTY CAN DO TO YOU.
FOR JUST A MOMENT THERE I THOUGHT SOMEONE WAS THERE BEHIND ME...
SOMEONE --SOMEONE I USED TO KNOW.
BUT STILL YOUR HEART LIES UNEASY, NATASHA...
FOR ALL YOUR PHILOSOPHY, YOU CAN NOT SHAKE YOUR FEELINGS OF GUILT.
NATASHA. BUT YOU REALLY MISSED IT TODAY.
THE LOCAL CHANNELS RAN TWO JOHN WAYNES--AND A W.C. FIELDS!
CARE FOR A WORK-OUT, SISTER?
NOT NOW, IVAN. I... WANT TO BE ALONE FOR A WHILE.
I HAVE TO THINK.

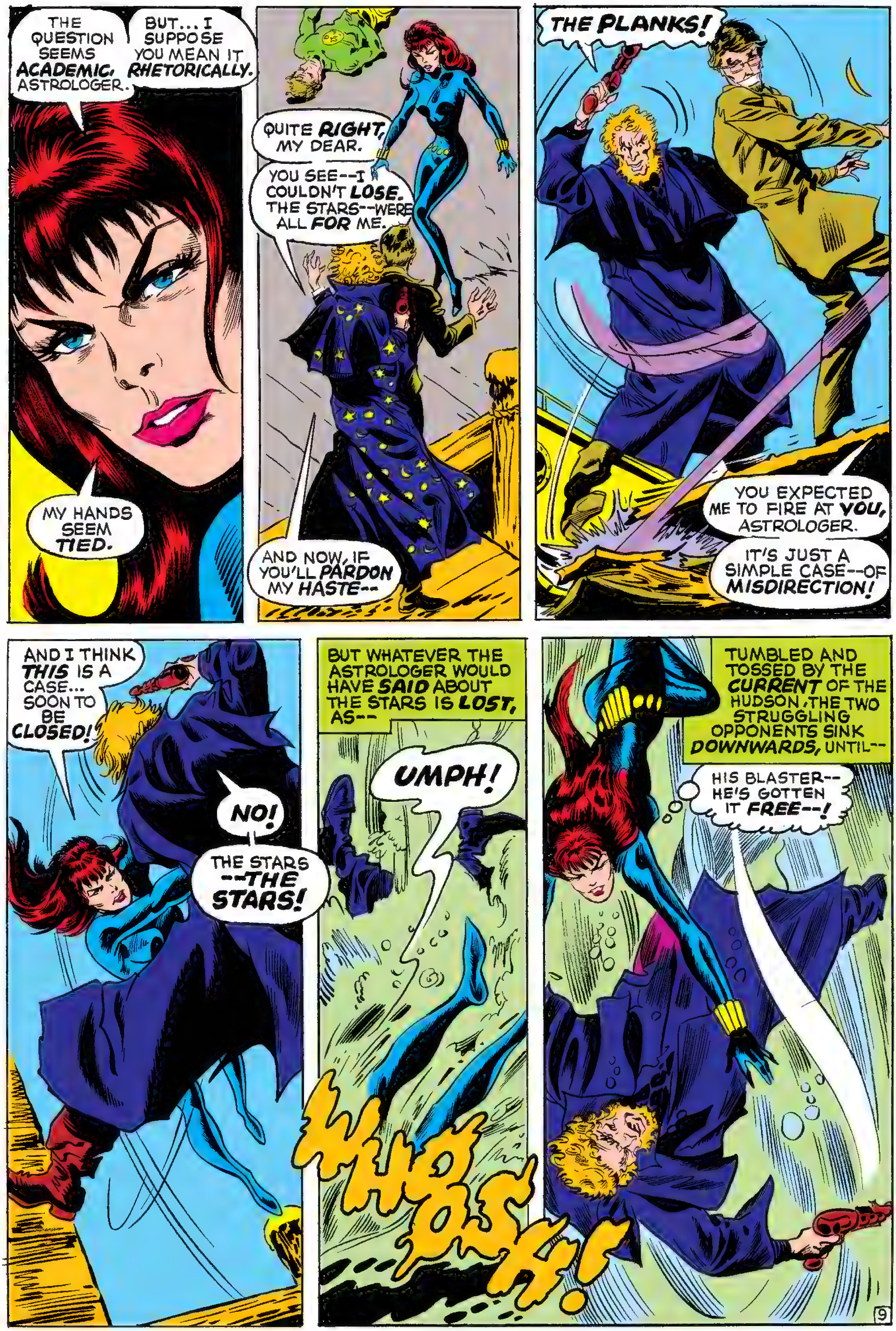

TIME PASSES WITH AGONIZING **SLOWNESS**, AND MUCH LATER...
'TASH, I'M GOING TO **CUT OUT.** YOU COMING?
'**TASH?**
SHE'S **LOST.** WELL, HANDSOME--LOOKS LIKE IT'S UP TO **YOU.**
THUMP!
THE DOOR...?
IVAN? **IVAN?**
NO ANSWER, BLACK WIDOW. IVAN'S **WHEREABOUTS** WILL SOON BE **APPARENT...** BUT FIRST, LET'S LOOK IN ON A **LOWER EAST SIDE** TENEMENT...
ASTROLOGER, YOU SURE KNOW YOUR **SYSTEM...** THE JOB WAS A **CINCH.**
GREYBEARD, HERE, FELL RIGHT INTO OUR ITCHIN' LITTLE **HANDS.**
NATURALLY. THAT'S BECAUSE I LET THE **STARS** DO MY PLANNING FOR ME.
FREDDY, M'BOY. COME **HERE.**
WHAT'S **UP**, GRAMPS?
YOU ARE UP, FREDDY! I WANT YOU TO GO TO **POLICE HEADQUARTERS--**
--AND **PRESENT** THEM WITH OUR LITTLE...**REQUEST.**
I CAN **DIG** IT, ASTROLOGER.
I'LL BE BACK **PRONTO.**
AND SO...
CAPTAIN LUMAS HAD **NOTHING...**
THE CASE IS AS **CLEAN** AS A WELL-CHEWED **BONE.**
WHOA, BIG MAN. WHAT'S THE LITTLE **BOY** DOIN' AT **PRECINCT HQ?**
POLICE
WHAT? SIXTY **THOUSAND** DOLLARS?
THE ASTROLOGER HAS **GOT** TO BE OUT OF HIS BLOODY **MIND.**
SORRY, WE DON'T SEE IT YOUR **WAY,** FUZZ.
REMEMBER, WE HOLD **ALL** THE CARDS. YOU DON'T EVEN **ARREST** ME--
--'CAUSE I GOTTA BE BACK **SOON...** OR THE DOC **DIES.**

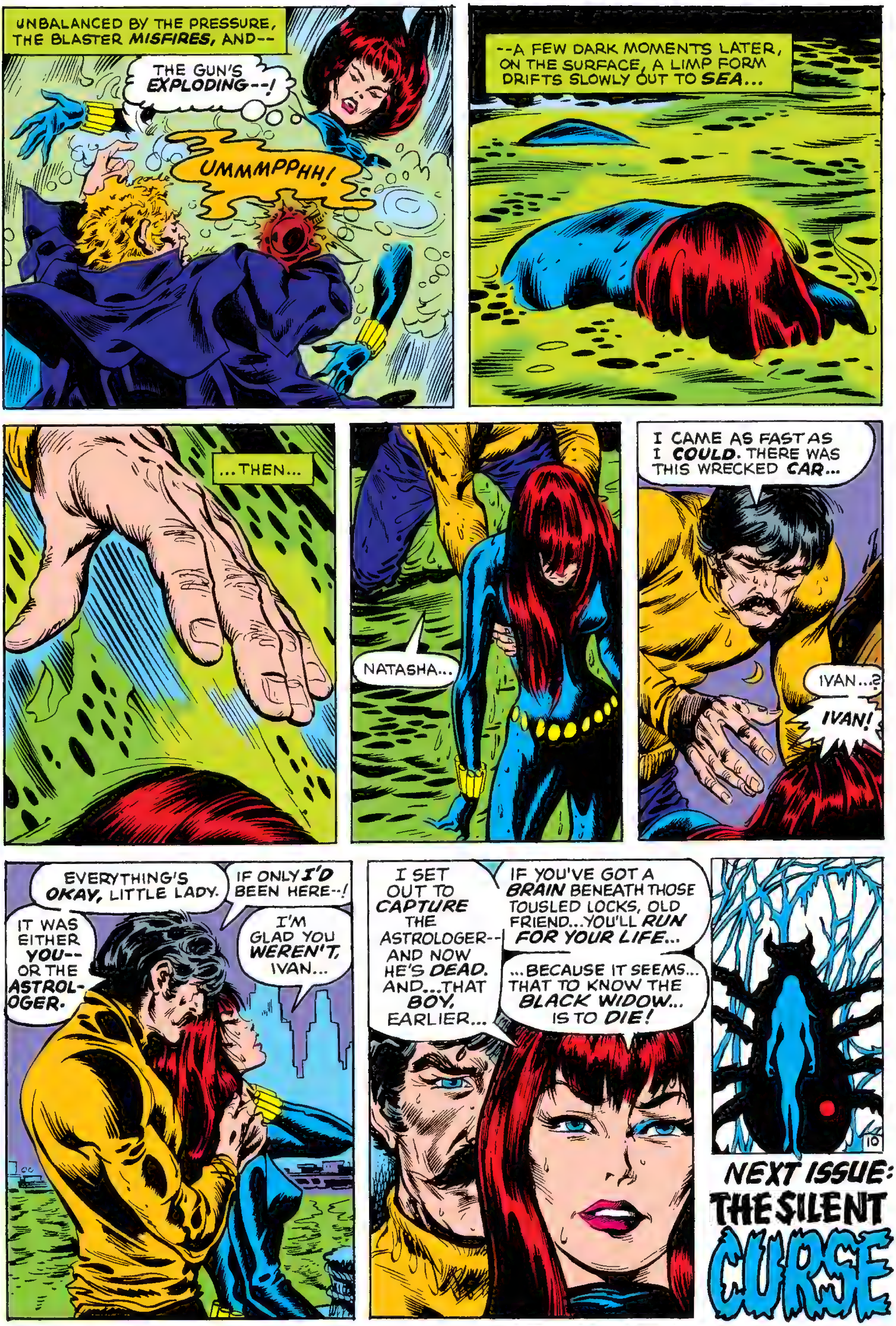

WELL, COMMISIONER? WHAT'LL WE **DO?**
DO? THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE **CAN** DO...
...PAY THE **RANSOM.**
WHAT A **GAS.**
POLICE
THOSE GUYS LOOKED LIKE THEIR **EYES** WERE GONNA FALL OUT.
HAW--AWWK!
HEY, PAL-- DON'T GO **'WAY!**
YOU 'N ME ARE GONNA HAVE A LITTLE **TALK--**
A LITTLE TALK, JUST LIKE **ANDY HARDY** AND HIS **PA.**
DON'T **BET** ON IT, FATSO.
...GOOD THING FOR **YOU** I DIDN'T TAKE THAT **BET,** SONNY.
TIME'S **RIPE** TO CALL **NATASHA...**
IVAN! WHERE **ARE** YOU?
SORRY, KID--BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR **PLEASANTRIES.**
I'VE LOCATED THE **ASTROLOGER--**
AN' I'VE DONE A LITTLE **LISTENIN'** TO HIS **PLANS.**
IF A KID NAMED **FREDDY** DON'T SHOW UP AT THE STAR-MAN'S TENEMENT IN **THREE MINUTES--**
--THE BIG CHEESE IS GONNA TRANSFER OUR PIGEON **ELSEWHERE** VIA **TRUCK.**
AHH... SPEAKIN' OF **CREEPS--!**
I'M **TRACKING** OUR PIGEON **NOW,** SISTER.
HE'S HEADIN' **WEST** ON **EIGHTH STREET.** FOLLOW WHEN YOU **CAN,** TASH...
THAT'LL BE **NOW,** IVAN. 'BYE, OLD FRIEND.


SOON...
HEY, ASTROLOGER--
TAKE A LOOK-SEE IN THE MIRROR.
I THINK SOMEBODY'S FOLLOWIN' US.
SO HE IS!
QUEENIE-- TAKE CARE OF OUR CARELESS PURSUER!
RIGHT ON, POPS!
SCRATCH ONE COP-CAR!
CHOOM!
BENNY, THE STARS ARE WITH US.
WE'LL DOUBLE THE RANSOM!
AND PERHAPS THE STARS LIE, OLD MAN, FOR AS YOUR TRUCK PASSES UNDER THE WASHINGTON SQUARE ARCH...
THEY MUST BE MAKING A DETOUR THROUGH THE PARK--
--WHICH IS MOST CONVENIENT FOR OUR FAVORITE LADY-IN BLACK!
MIKE
IVAN... COME IN, IVAN. THIS IS NATASHA.
NO USE! HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HIM? HAS MY WIDOW'S CURSE STRUCK HIM AS WELL?
IVAN...? NO!
THE MINUTES PASS QUICKLY, NOW, AND SOON THE ANCIENT TRUCK BARRELS ALONG TWELFTH AVENUE... THE WHARVES.
HERE THE AIR IS COOL AND CLAMMY, THE NIGHT MUFFLED BY THIN MISTS. ALL SOUNDS ARE DEADENED--EVEN THE DISTANT BUOY BELLS...


ALL'S **CLEAR,** OLD MAN.
YOU **HEARD** THE LADY, FOUR-EYES. IT'S TIME TO **SPLIT.**
HURRY! **HURRY.**
BY THE **STARS** --WE'LL BE **SAFE** ONCE WE GUIDE OUR LAUNCH TO THE **OPEN SEA...**
...WHERE WE CAN **RAISE OUR PRICE AT WILL.**
THE POLICE **SHOULD NOT** HAVE TRIED TO **FOLLOW** US--AS THEY'LL SOON **DISCOVER.**
NICE PLAN, ASTROLOGER --SAVE FOR ONE SMALL **FLAW.**
THE **POLICE** WEREN'T FOLLOWING YOU--
BRAP
--**I** WAS!
TOO DARK TO SEE--**WHO--?**
UNNNNH!
SORRY, YOUNG MAN --YOU'VE LOST YOUR **TURN.**
NO! THE STARS DID NOT **FORETELL** THIS--
--THE BLACK WIDOW!
I THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO **WRAP UP** THIS AFFAIR QUITE **EASILY,** NOW!
WOULDN'T YOU **AGREE,** FRIEND?
TWAP!
GOOD **GUESS,** WHITE-HAIR.


KIDNAPPING *ANYONE* IS A FEDERAL *OFFENSE,* ASTROLOGER--
--BUT TAKING A MAN WHO'S BEEN WORKING ON A *BLOOD SUBSTITUTE*--
--IS *POSITIVELY CONTEMPTIBLE.*
WATCH WHAT YOU SAY, CHICK.
THAT'S OUR *BOSS* YOU'RE PUTTIN' DOWN.
REALLY? I'M AFRAID THAT'S *CONDEMNATION*--
--BY *FAINT PRAISE,* FRIEND!
MY! DID YOU GET *INJURED?*
YOU'LL REALLY HAVE TO *WATCH* THOSE TOYS--
THEY TEND TO BE *DANGEROUS.*
FORGET THE *WIDOW.* SHE'LL NOT BE *TROUBLING* US, ANYMORE...
WILL YOU, LASS?
DOCTOR LICHENSTEIN!
AYE. THE DEAR DOCTOR'S IN A POOR *POSITION,* MADAME NATASHA.
WOULDN'T YOU *AGREE?*
8


THE QUESTION SEEMS ACADEMIC, ASTROLOGER.
BUT... I SUPPOSE YOU MEAN IT RHETORICALLY.
MY HANDS SEEM TIED.
QUITE RIGHT, MY DEAR.
YOU SEE--I COULDN'T LOSE. THE STARS--WERE ALL FOR ME.
AND NOW, IF YOU'LL PARDON MY HASTE--
THE PLANKS!
YOU EXPECTED ME TO FIRE AT YOU, ASTROLOGER.
IT'S JUST A SIMPLE CASE--OF MISDIRECTION!
AND I THINK THIS IS A CASE... SOON TO BE CLOSED!
NO!
THE STARS --THE STARS!
BUT WHATEVER THE ASTROLOGER WOULD HAVE SAID ABOUT THE STARS IS LOST, AS--
UMPH!
WHOOSH!
TUMBLED AND TOSSED BY THE CURRENT OF THE HUDSON, THE TWO STRUGGLING OPPONENTS SINK DOWNWARDS, UNTIL--
HIS BLASTER--HE'S GOTTEN IT FREE--!


UNBALANCED BY THE PRESSURE, THE BLASTER MISFIRES, AND--
THE GUN'S EXPLODING--!
UMMMPPHH!
--A FEW DARK MOMENTS LATER, ON THE SURFACE, A LIMP FORM DRIFTS SLOWLY OUT TO SEA...
...THEN...
NATASHA...
I CAME AS FAST AS I COULD. THERE WAS THIS WRECKED CAR...
IVAN...?
IVAN!
EVERYTHING'S OKAY, LITTLE LADY.
IF ONLY I'D BEEN HERE--!
IT WAS EITHER YOU--OR THE ASTROLOGER.
I'M GLAD YOU WEREN'T, IVAN...
I SET OUT TO CAPTURE THE ASTROLOGER--AND NOW HE'S DEAD. AND...THAT BOY, EARLIER...
IF YOU'VE GOT A BRAIN BENEATH THOSE TOUSLED LOCKS, OLD FRIEND...YOU'LL RUN FOR YOUR LIFE...
...BECAUSE IT SEEMS...THAT TO KNOW THE BLACK WIDOW...IS TO DIE!
10
NEXT ISSUE: THE SILENT CURSE

AMAZING ADVENTURES
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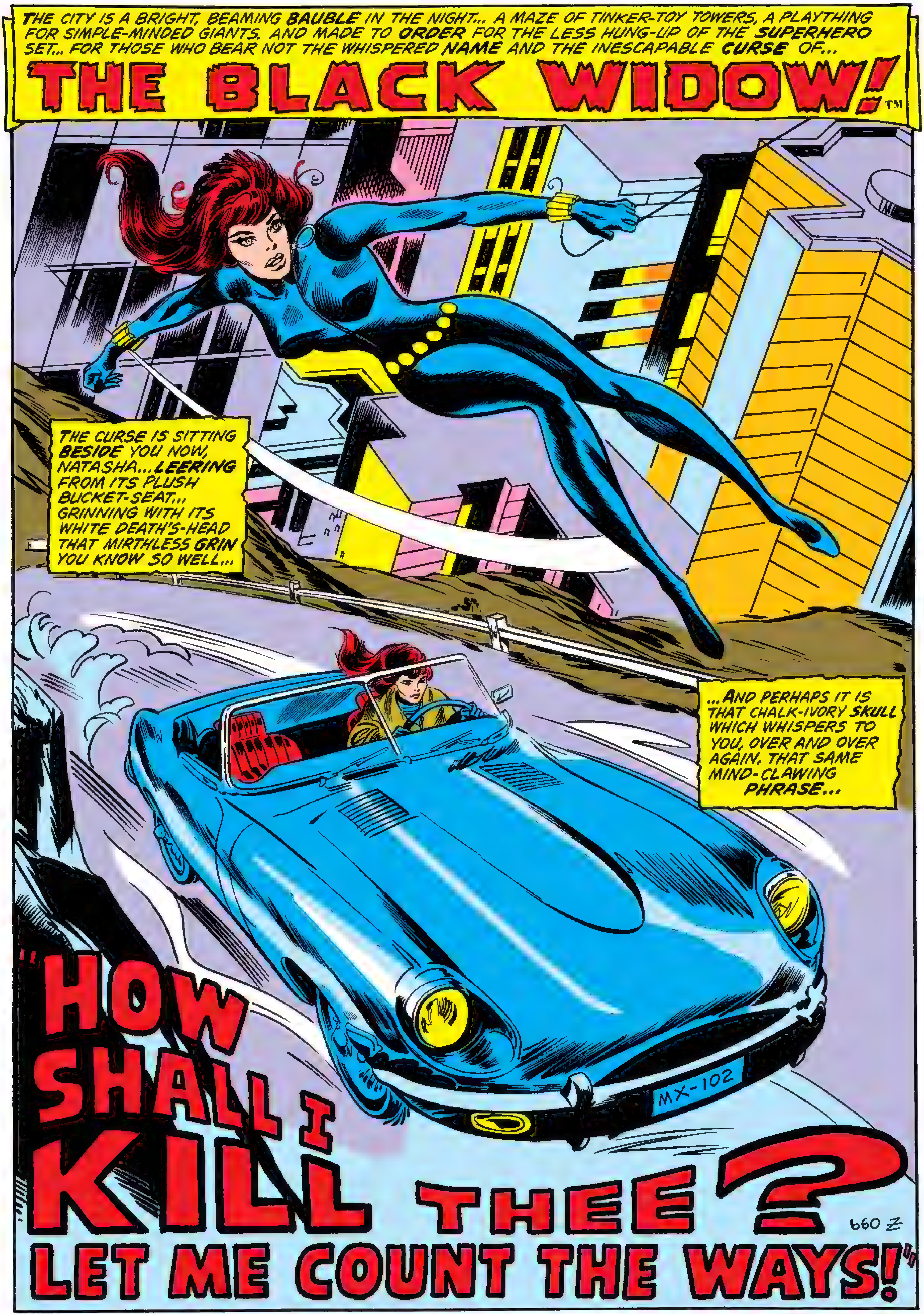
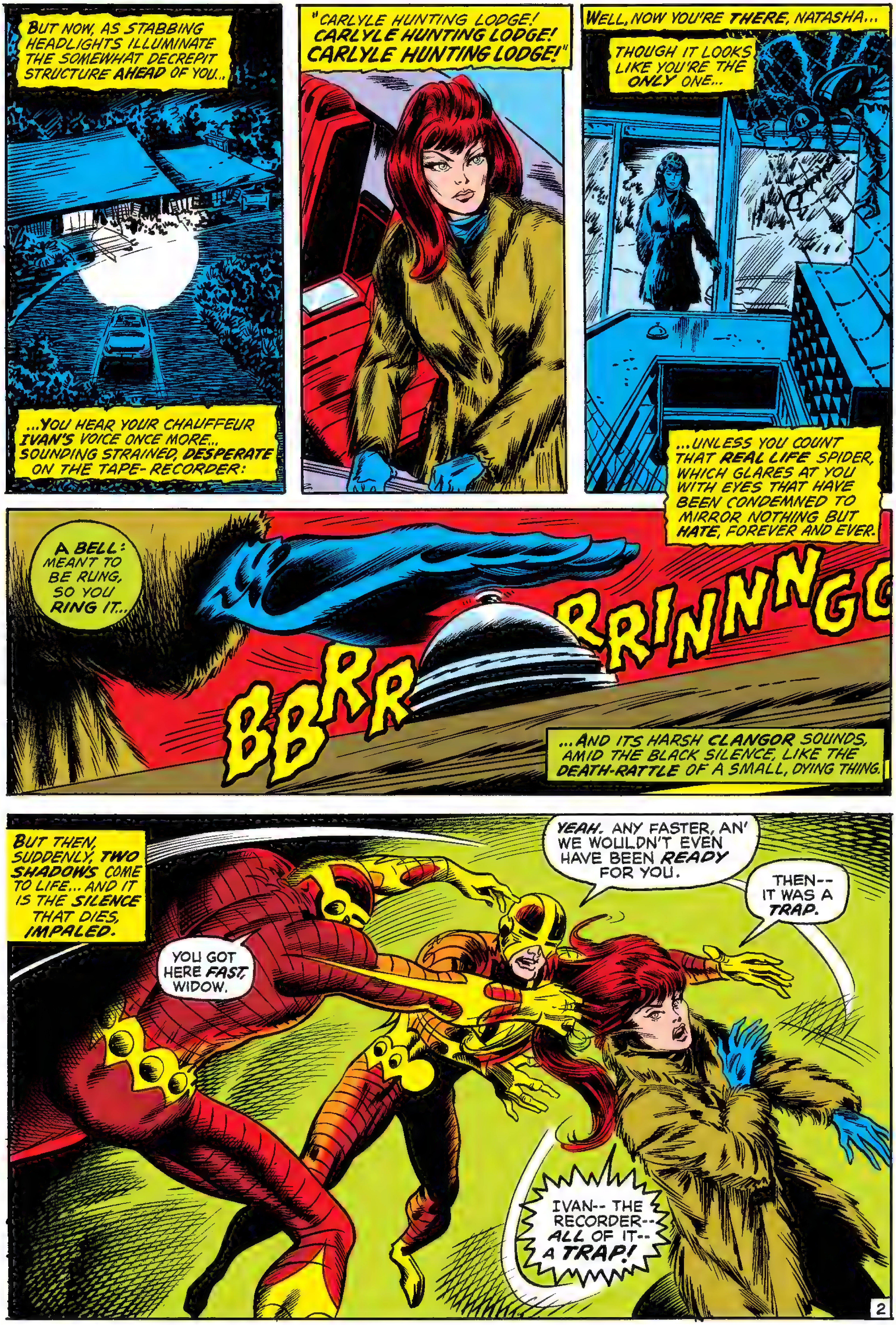
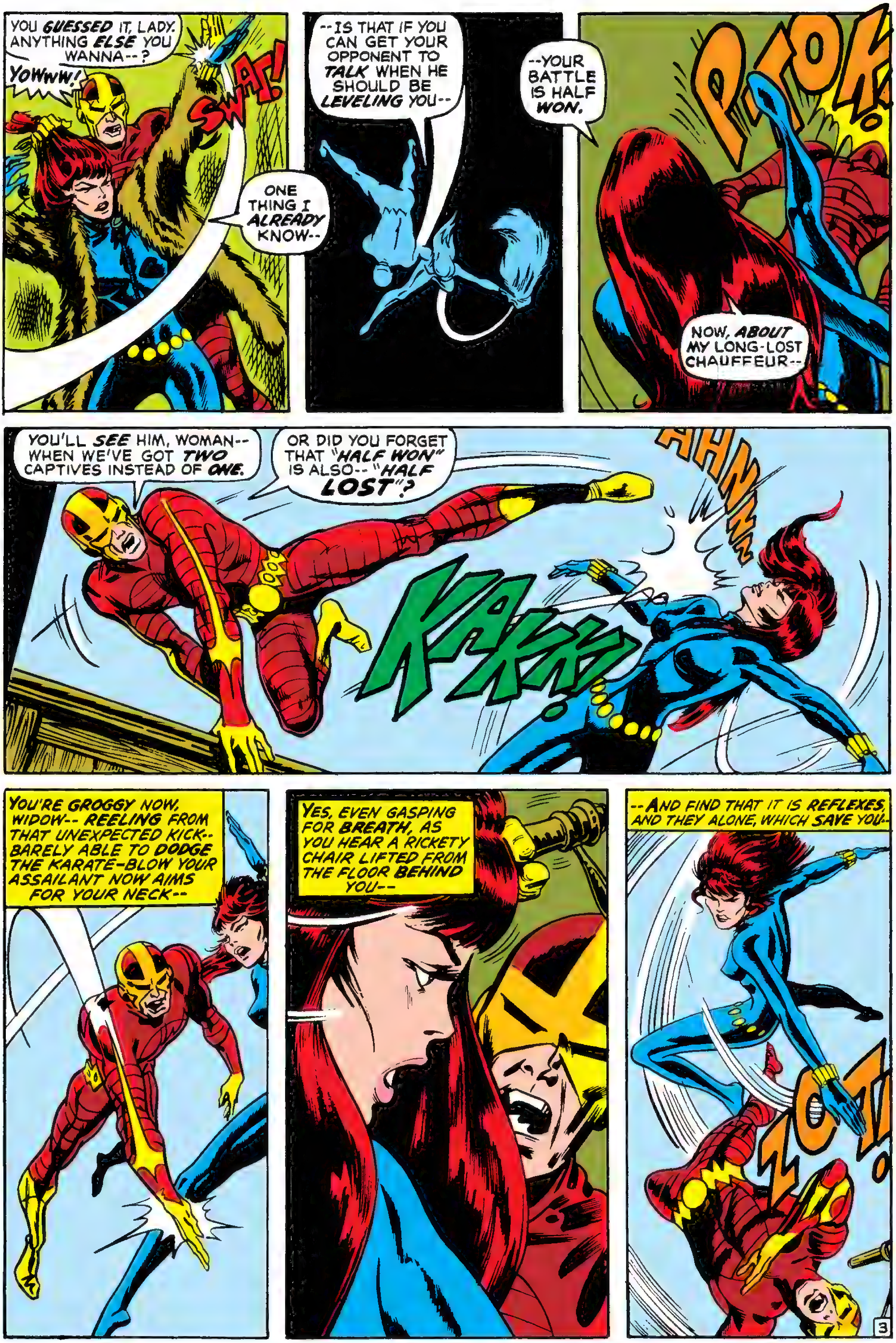
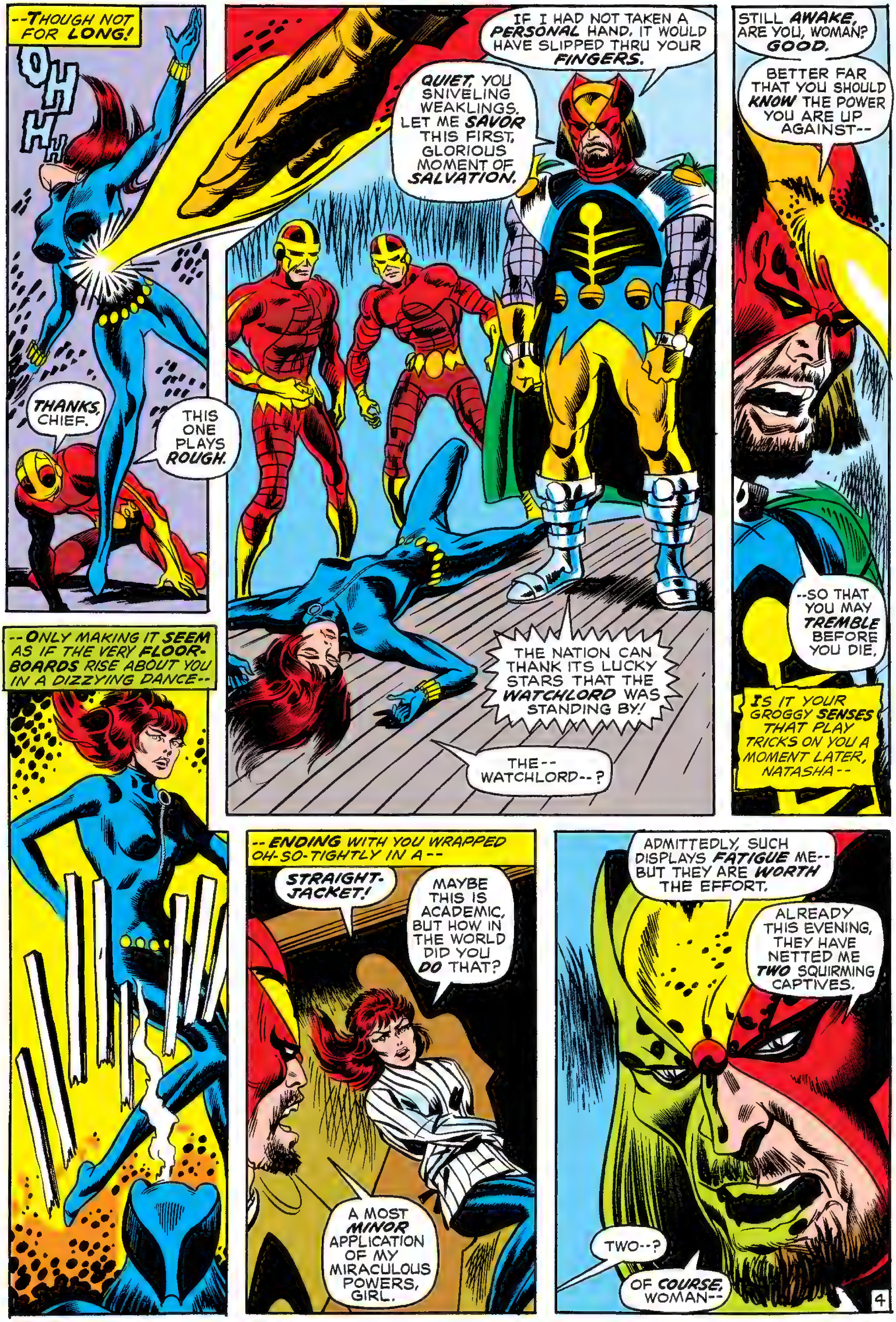
AMAZING ADVENTURES
FEATURING
THE INHUMANS
AND THE
BLACK WIDOW
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
BLACK BOLT VS. THOR 'NUFF SAID!
PLUS: THE WEB OF THE BLACK WIDOW!
2 TRIUMPHS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

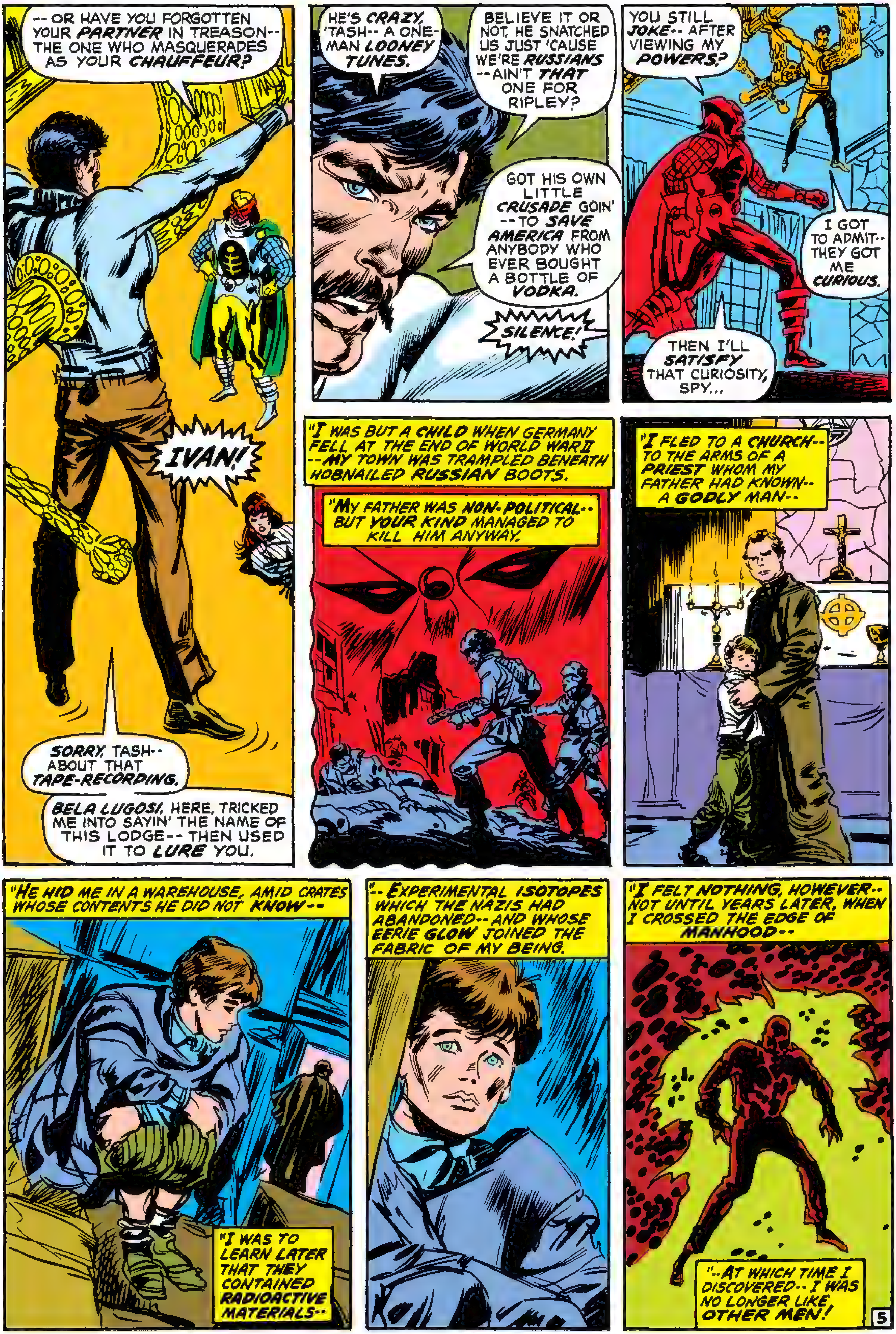

THE CITY IS A BRIGHT, BEAMING BAUBLE IN THE NIGHT... A MAZE OF TINKER-TOY TOWERS, A PLAYTHING FOR SIMPLE-MINDED GIANTS, AND MADE TO ORDER FOR THE LESS HUNG-UP OF THE SUPERHERO SET... FOR THOSE WHO BEAR NOT THE WHISPERED NAME AND THE INESCAPABLE CURSE OF...
THE BLACK WIDOW!™
THE CURSE IS SITTING BESIDE YOU NOW, NATASHA... LEERING FROM ITS PLUSH BUCKET-SEAT... GRINNING WITH ITS WHITE DEATH'S-HEAD THAT MIRTHLESS GRIN YOU KNOW SO WELL...
...AND PERHAPS IT IS THAT CHALK-IVORY SKULL WHICH WHISPERS TO YOU, OVER AND OVER AGAIN, THAT SAME MIND-CLAWING PHRASE...
MX-102
"HOW SHALL I KILL THEE? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS!"

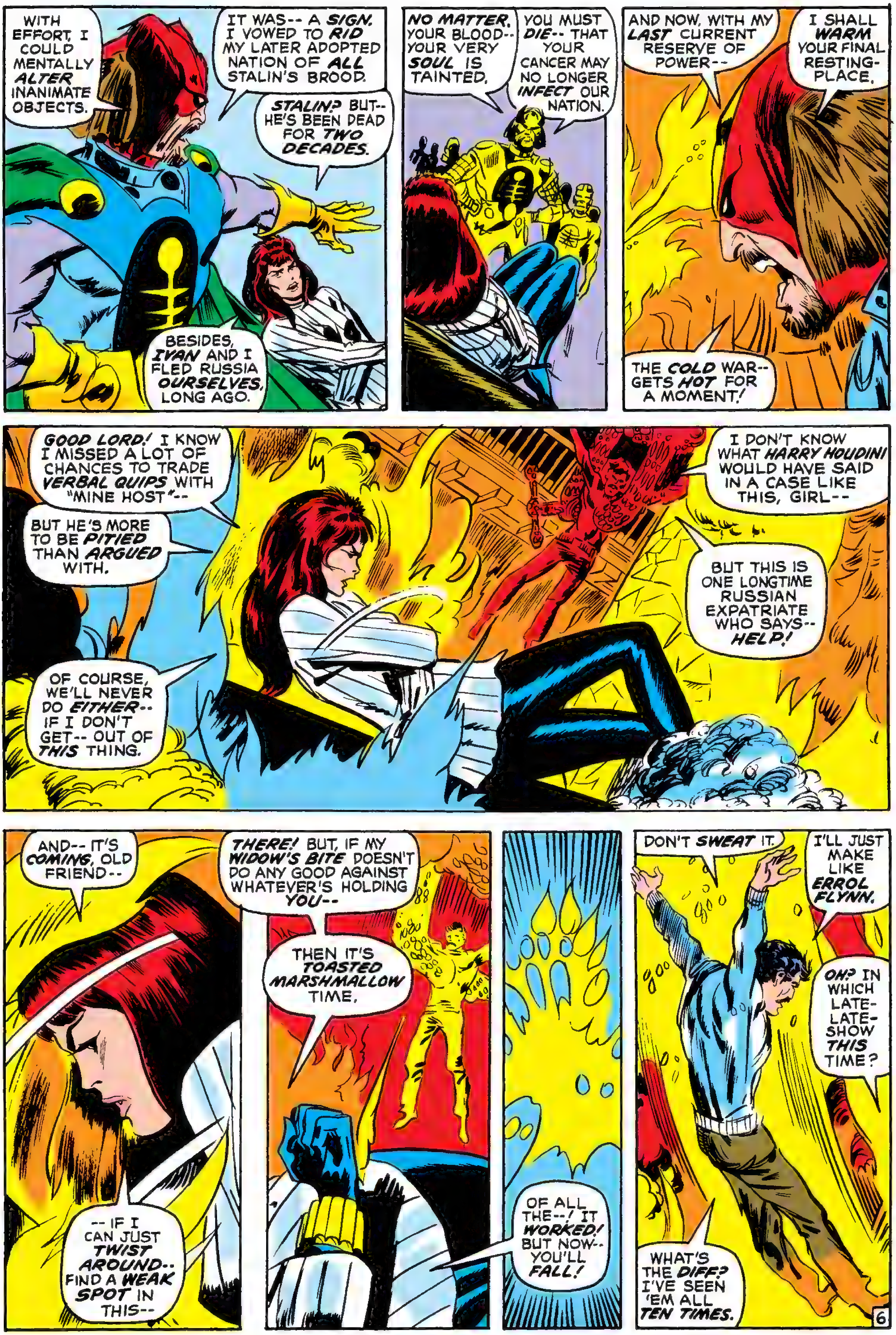
STAN LEE EDITOR * ROY THOMAS WRITER * DON HECK + BILL EVERETT ARTISTS * PLOTTED BY GERRY CONWAY
LETTERED BY JEAN IZZO

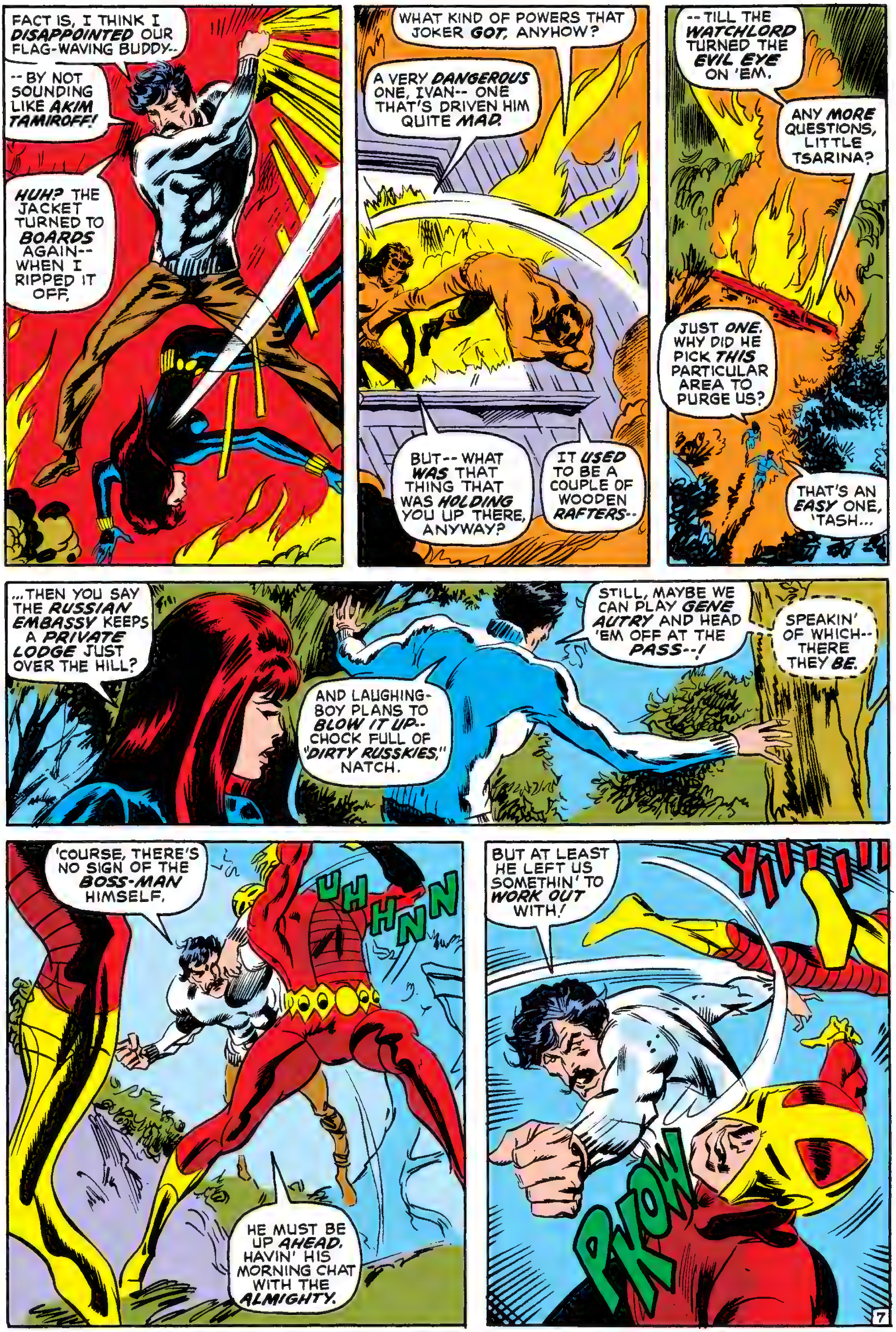

BUT NOW, AS STABBING HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE SOMEWHAT DECREPIT STRUCTURE AHEAD OF YOU...
...YOU HEAR YOUR CHAUFFEUR IVAN'S VOICE ONCE MORE... SOUNDING STRAINED, DESPERATE ON THE TAPE-RECORDER:
"CARLYLE HUNTING LODGE! CARLYLE HUNTING LODGE! CARLYLE HUNTING LODGE!"
WELL, NOW YOU'RE THERE, NATASHA...
THOUGH IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE...
...UNLESS YOU COUNT THAT REAL LIFE SPIDER, WHICH GLARES AT YOU WITH EYES THAT HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED TO MIRROR NOTHING BUT HATE, FOREVER AND EVER.
A BELL: MEANT TO BE RUNG, SO YOU RING IT...
BBRRRRINNNGG
...AND ITS HARSH CLANGOR SOUNDS, AMID THE BLACK SILENCE, LIKE THE DEATH-RATTLE OF A SMALL, DYING THING.
BUT THEN, SUDDENLY, TWO SHADOWS COME TO LIFE... AND IT IS THE SILENCE THAT DIES, IMPALED.
YOU GOT HERE FAST, WIDOW.
YEAH. ANY FASTER, AN' WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE BEEN READY FOR YOU.
THEN-- IT WAS A TRAP.
IVAN-- THE RECORDER-- ALL OF IT-- A TRAP!

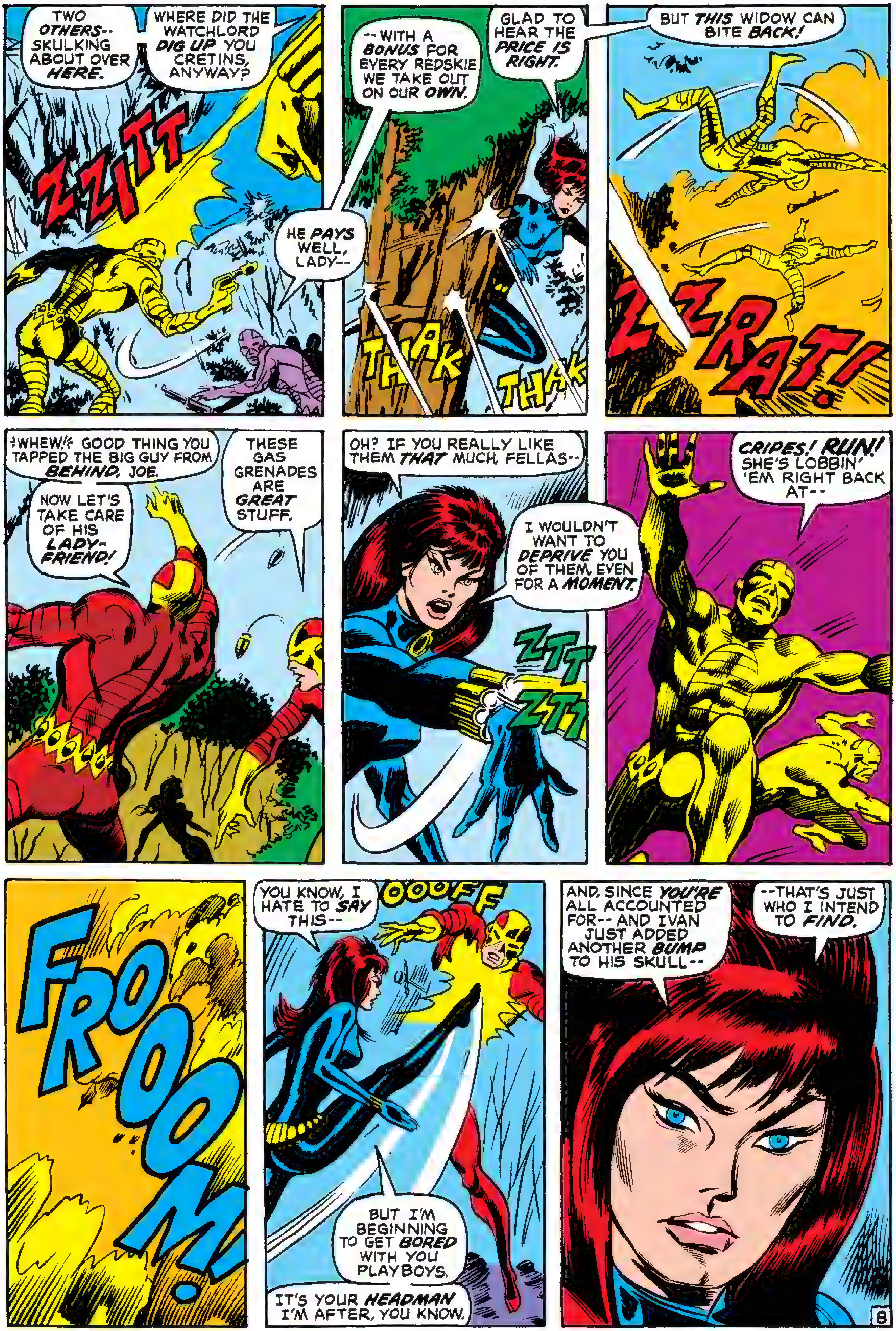

YOU GUESSED IT, LADY. ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANNA--?
YOWWW!
SWAT!
ONE THING I ALREADY KNOW--
--IS THAT IF YOU CAN GET YOUR OPPONENT TO TALK WHEN HE SHOULD BE LEVELING YOU--
--YOUR BATTLE IS HALF WON.
P-TOK!
NOW, ABOUT MY LONG-LOST CHAUFFEUR--
YOU'LL SEE HIM, WOMAN-- WHEN WE'VE GOT TWO CAPTIVES INSTEAD OF ONE.
OR DID YOU FORGET THAT "HALF WON" IS ALSO-- "HALF LOST"?
AHNNN
KAKK!
YOU'RE GROGGY NOW, WIDOW-- REELING FROM THAT UNEXPECTED KICK-- BARELY ABLE TO DODGE THE KARATE-BLOW YOUR ASSAILANT NOW AIMS FOR YOUR NECK--
YES, EVEN GASPING FOR BREATH, AS YOU HEAR A RICKETY CHAIR LIFTED FROM THE FLOOR BEHIND YOU--
--AND FIND THAT IT IS REFLEXES, AND THEY ALONE, WHICH SAVE YOU--
ZOT!
3

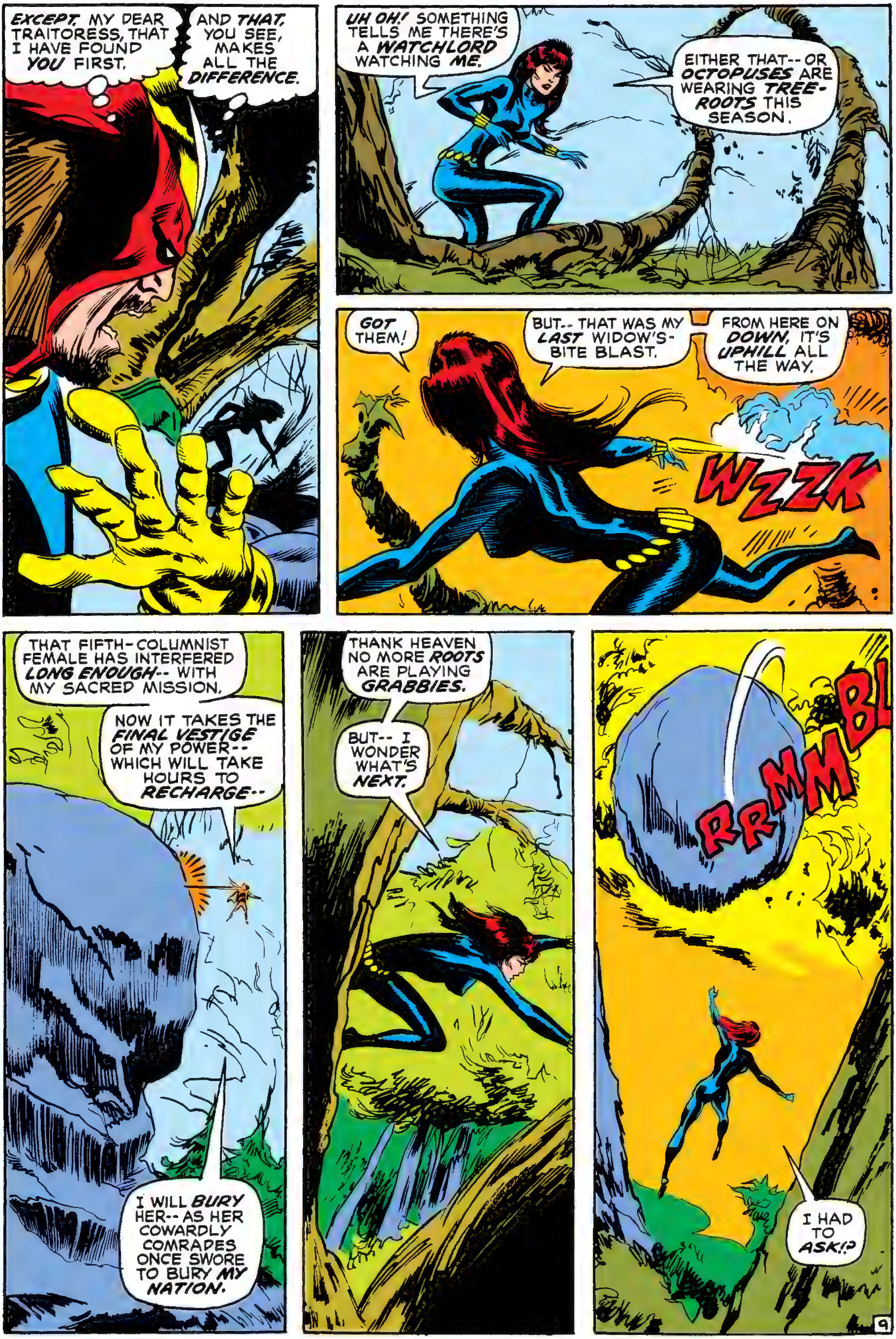

--THOUGH NOT FOR LONG!
OHHHH
THANKS, CHIEF.
THIS ONE PLAYS ROUGH.
IF I HAD NOT TAKEN A PERSONAL HAND, IT WOULD HAVE SLIPPED THRU YOUR FINGERS.
QUIET, YOU SNIVELING WEAKLINGS. LET ME SAVOR THIS FIRST, GLORIOUS MOMENT OF SALVATION.
THE NATION CAN THANK ITS LUCKY STARS THAT THE WATCHLORD WAS STANDING BY!
THE-- WATCHLORD--?
STILL AWAKE, ARE YOU, WOMAN? GOOD.
BETTER FAR THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW THE POWER YOU ARE UP AGAINST--
--SO THAT YOU MAY TREMBLE BEFORE YOU DIE.
IS IT YOUR GROGGY SENSES THAT PLAY TRICKS ON YOU A MOMENT LATER, NATASHA--
--ONLY MAKING IT SEEM AS IF THE VERY FLOORBOARDS RISE ABOUT YOU IN A DIZZYING DANCE--
--ENDING WITH YOU WRAPPED OH-SO-TIGHTLY IN A--
STRAIGHT-JACKET!
MAYBE THIS IS ACADEMIC, BUT HOW IN THE WORLD DID YOU DO THAT?
A MOST MINOR APPLICATION OF MY MIRACULOUS POWERS, GIRL.
ADMITTEDLY, SUCH DISPLAYS FATIGUE ME-- BUT THEY ARE WORTH THE EFFORT.
ALREADY THIS EVENING, THEY HAVE NETTED ME TWO SQUIRMING CAPTIVES.
TWO--?
OF COURSE, WOMAN--

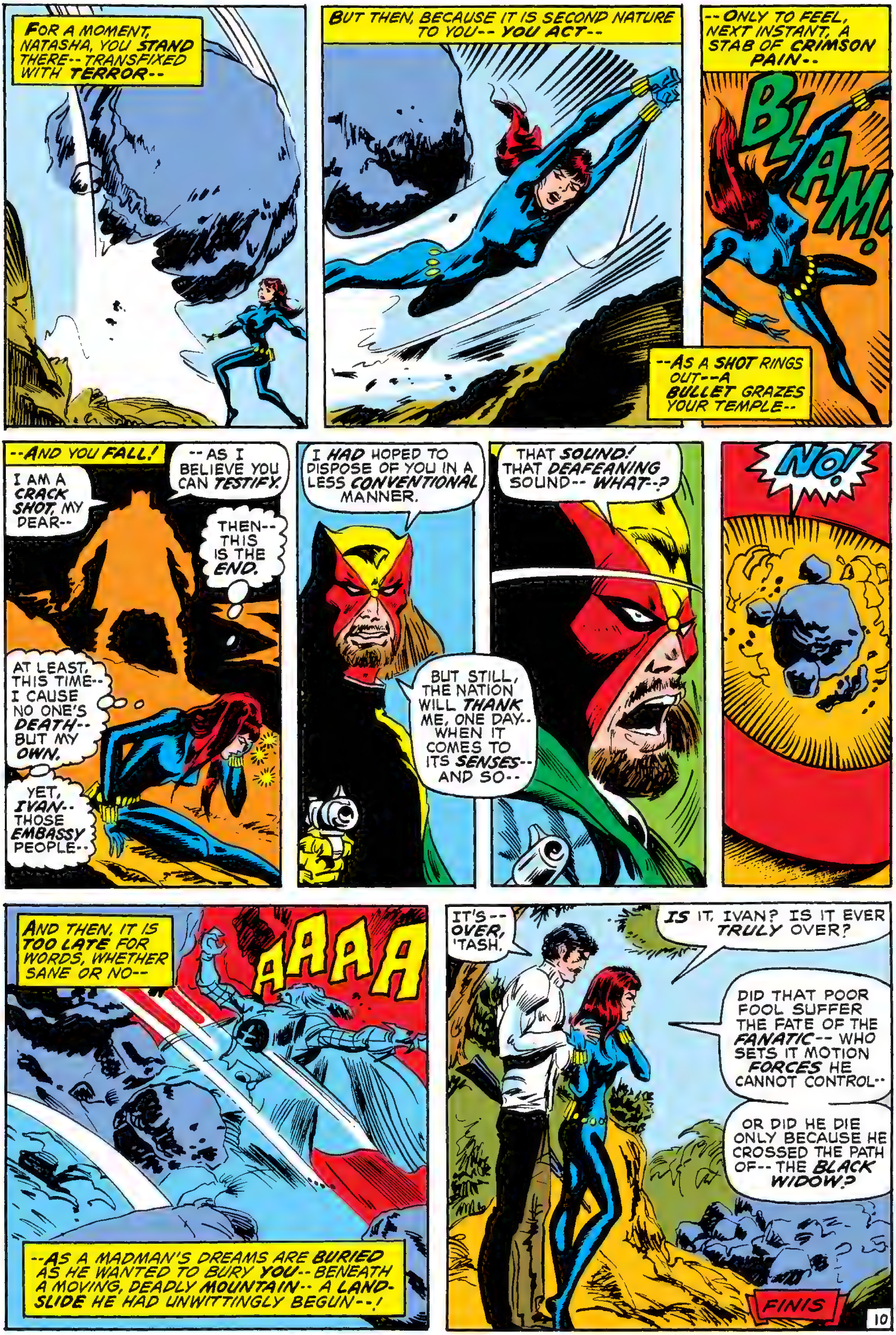

-- OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR PARTNER IN TREASON-- THE ONE WHO MASQUERADES AS YOUR CHAUFFEUR?
IVAN!
SORRY, TASH-- ABOUT THAT TAPE-RECORDING.
BELA LUGOSI, HERE, TRICKED ME INTO SAYIN' THE NAME OF THIS LODGE-- THEN USED IT TO LURE YOU.
HE'S CRAZY, 'TASH-- A ONE-MAN LOONEY TUNES.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, HE SNATCHED US JUST 'CAUSE WE'RE RUSSIANS --AIN'T THAT ONE FOR RIPLEY?
GOT HIS OWN LITTLE CRUSADE GOIN' --TO SAVE AMERICA FROM ANYBODY WHO EVER BOUGHT A BOTTLE OF VODKA.
SILENCE!
YOU STILL JOKE-- AFTER VIEWING MY POWERS?
I GOT TO ADMIT-- THEY GOT ME CURIOUS.
THEN I'LL SATISFY THAT CURIOSITY, SPY...
"I WAS BUT A CHILD WHEN GERMANY FELL AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II --MY TOWN WAS TRAMPLED BENEATH HOBNAILED RUSSIAN BOOTS.
"MY FATHER WAS NON-POLITICAL-- BUT YOUR KIND MANAGED TO KILL HIM ANYWAY.
"I FLED TO A CHURCH-- TO THE ARMS OF A PRIEST WHOM MY FATHER HAD KNOWN-- A GODLY MAN--
"HE HID ME IN A WAREHOUSE, AMID CRATES WHOSE CONTENTS HE DID NOT KNOW--
"I WAS TO LEARN LATER THAT THEY CONTAINED RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS--
"--EXPERIMENTAL ISOTOPES WHICH THE NAZIS HAD ABANDONED-- AND WHOSE EERIE GLOW JOINED THE FABRIC OF MY BEING.
"I FELT NOTHING, HOWEVER-- NOT UNTIL YEARS LATER, WHEN I CROSSED THE EDGE OF MANHOOD--
"--AT WHICH TIME I DISCOVERED-- I WAS NO LONGER LIKE OTHER MEN!


WITH EFFORT, I COULD MENTALLY ALTER INANIMATE OBJECTS.
IT WAS-- A SIGN. I VOWED TO RID MY LATER ADOPTED NATION OF ALL STALIN'S BROOD.
STALIN? BUT-- HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR TWO DECADES.
BESIDES, IVAN AND I FLED RUSSIA OURSELVES, LONG AGO.
NO MATTER. YOUR BLOOD-- YOUR VERY SOUL IS TAINTED.
YOU MUST DIE-- THAT YOUR CANCER MAY NO LONGER INFECT OUR NATION.
AND NOW, WITH MY LAST CURRENT RESERVE OF POWER--
I SHALL WARM YOUR FINAL RESTING-PLACE.
THE COLD WAR-- GETS HOT FOR A MOMENT!
GOOD LORD! I KNOW I MISSED A LOT OF CHANCES TO TRADE VERBAL QUIPS WITH "MINE HOST"--
BUT HE'S MORE TO BE PITIED THAN ARGUED WITH.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HARRY HOUDINI WOULD HAVE SAID IN A CASE LIKE THIS, GIRL--
BUT THIS IS ONE LONGTIME RUSSIAN EXPATRIATE WHO SAYS-- HELP!
OF COURSE, WE'LL NEVER DO EITHER-- IF I DON'T GET-- OUT OF THIS THING.
AND-- IT'S COMING, OLD FRIEND--
-- IF I CAN JUST TWIST AROUND-- FIND A WEAK SPOT IN THIS--
THERE! BUT, IF MY WIDOW'S BITE DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD AGAINST WHATEVER'S HOLDING YOU--
THEN IT'S TOASTED MARSHMALLOW TIME.
OF ALL THE--! IT WORKED! BUT NOW-- YOU'LL FALL!
DON'T SWEAT IT.
I'LL JUST MAKE LIKE ERROL FLYNN.
OH? IN WHICH LATE-LATE-SHOW THIS TIME?
WHAT'S THE DIFF? I'VE SEEN 'EM ALL TEN TIMES.


FACT IS, I THINK I *DISAPPOINTED* OUR FLAG-WAVING BUDDY--
-- BY NOT SOUNDING LIKE *AKIM TAMIROFF!*
HUH? THE JACKET TURNED TO *BOARDS* AGAIN-- WHEN I RIPPED IT OFF.
WHAT KIND OF POWERS THAT JOKER *GOT*, ANYHOW?
A VERY *DANGEROUS* ONE, IVAN-- ONE THAT'S DRIVEN HIM QUITE *MAD*.
BUT-- WHAT *WAS* THAT THING THAT WAS *HOLDING* YOU UP THERE, ANYWAY?
IT *USED* TO BE A COUPLE OF WOODEN *RAFTERS*--
-- TILL THE *WATCHLORD* TURNED THE *EVIL EYE* ON 'EM.
ANY *MORE* QUESTIONS, LITTLE TSARINA?
JUST *ONE*. WHY DID HE PICK *THIS* PARTICULAR AREA TO PURGE US?
THAT'S AN *EASY* ONE, 'TASH...
...THEN YOU SAY THE *RUSSIAN EMBASSY* KEEPS A *PRIVATE LODGE* JUST OVER THE HILL?
AND LAUGHING-BOY PLANS TO *BLOW IT UP*-- CHOCK FULL OF *"DIRTY RUSSKIES,"* NATCH.
STILL, MAYBE WE CAN PLAY *GENE AUTRY* AND HEAD 'EM OFF AT THE *PASS*--!
SPEAKIN' OF WHICH-- THERE THEY *BE*.
'COURSE, THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE *BOSS-MAN* HIMSELF.
UHHHNN
HE MUST BE UP *AHEAD*, HAVIN' HIS MORNING CHAT WITH THE *ALMIGHTY*.
BUT AT LEAST HE LEFT US SOMETHIN' TO *WORK OUT* WITH!
YIIII!!
PKOW


TWO OTHERS-- SKULKING ABOUT OVER HERE.
WHERE DID THE WATCHLORD DIG UP YOU CRETINS, ANYWAY?
ZZITT
HE PAYS WELL, LADY--
--WITH A BONUS FOR EVERY REDSKIE WE TAKE OUT ON OUR OWN.
GLAD TO HEAR THE PRICE IS RIGHT.
THAK
THAK
BUT THIS WIDOW CAN BITE BACK!
ZZRAT!
WHEW! GOOD THING YOU TAPPED THE BIG GUY FROM BEHIND, JOE.
NOW LET'S TAKE CARE OF HIS LADY-FRIEND!
THESE GAS GRENADES ARE GREAT STUFF.
OH? IF YOU REALLY LIKE THEM THAT MUCH, FELLAS--
I WOULDN'T WANT TO DEPRIVE YOU OF THEM, EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
ZTT
ZTT
CRIPES! RUN! SHE'S LOBBIN' 'EM RIGHT BACK AT--
FROOOOM!
YOU KNOW, I HATE TO SAY THIS--
OOOFF
BUT I'M BEGINNING TO GET BORED WITH YOU PLAYBOYS.
IT'S YOUR HEADMAN I'M AFTER, YOU KNOW.
AND, SINCE YOU'RE ALL ACCOUNTED FOR-- AND IVAN JUST ADDED ANOTHER BUMP TO HIS SKULL--
--THAT'S JUST WHO I INTEND TO FIND.


EXCEPT, MY DEAR TRAITORESS, THAT I HAVE FOUND YOU FIRST.
AND THAT, YOU SEE, MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.
UH OH! SOMETHING TELLS ME THERE'S A WATCHLORD WATCHING ME.
EITHER THAT-- OR OCTOPUSES ARE WEARING TREE-ROOTS THIS SEASON.
GOT THEM!
BUT-- THAT WAS MY LAST WIDOW'S-BITE BLAST.
FROM HERE ON DOWN, IT'S UPHILL ALL THE WAY.
WZZK
THAT FIFTH-COLUMNIST FEMALE HAS INTERFERED LONG ENOUGH-- WITH MY SACRED MISSION.
NOW IT TAKES THE FINAL VESTIGE OF MY POWER-- WHICH WILL TAKE HOURS TO RECHARGE--
I WILL BURY HER-- AS HER COWARDLY COMRADES ONCE SWORE TO BURY MY NATION.
THANK HEAVEN NO MORE ROOTS ARE PLAYING GRABBIES.
BUT-- I WONDER WHAT'S NEXT.
RRMMBL
I HAD TO ASK!?


FOR A MOMENT, NATASHA, YOU **STAND** THERE-- TRANSFIXED WITH **TERROR**--
BUT THEN, BECAUSE IT IS SECOND NATURE TO YOU-- **YOU ACT**--
-- ONLY TO FEEL, NEXT INSTANT, A STAB OF **CRIMSON PAIN**--
BLAM!
-- AS A **SHOT** RINGS OUT -- A **BULLET** GRAZES YOUR TEMPLE--
-- AND YOU **FALL!**
I AM A **CRACK SHOT**, MY DEAR--
-- AS I BELIEVE YOU CAN **TESTIFY**.
THEN-- THIS IS THE **END**.
AT LEAST, THIS TIME-- I CAUSE NO ONE'S **DEATH**-- BUT MY **OWN**.
YET, **IVAN**-- THOSE **EMBASSY** PEOPLE--
I **HAD** HOPED TO DISPOSE OF YOU IN A LESS **CONVENTIONAL** MANNER.
BUT STILL, THE NATION WILL **THANK** ME, ONE DAY-- WHEN IT COMES TO ITS **SENSES**-- AND SO--
THAT **SOUND!** THAT **DEAFENING** SOUND-- **WHAT**--?
NO!
AND THEN, IT IS **TOO LATE** FOR WORDS, WHETHER SANE OR NO--
AAAA
-- AS A MADMAN'S DREAMS ARE **BURIED** AS HE WANTED TO BURY **YOU**-- BENEATH A MOVING, DEADLY **MOUNTAIN**-- A **LANDSLIDE** HE HAD UNWITTINGLY BEGUN--!
IT'S -- **OVER**, 'TASH.
IS IT, IVAN? IS IT EVER **TRULY** OVER?
DID THAT POOR FOOL SUFFER THE FATE OF THE **FANATIC**-- WHO SETS IT MOTION **FORCES** HE CANNOT CONTROL--
OR DID HE DIE ONLY BECAUSE HE CROSSED THE PATH OF-- THE **BLACK WIDOW?**
FINIS

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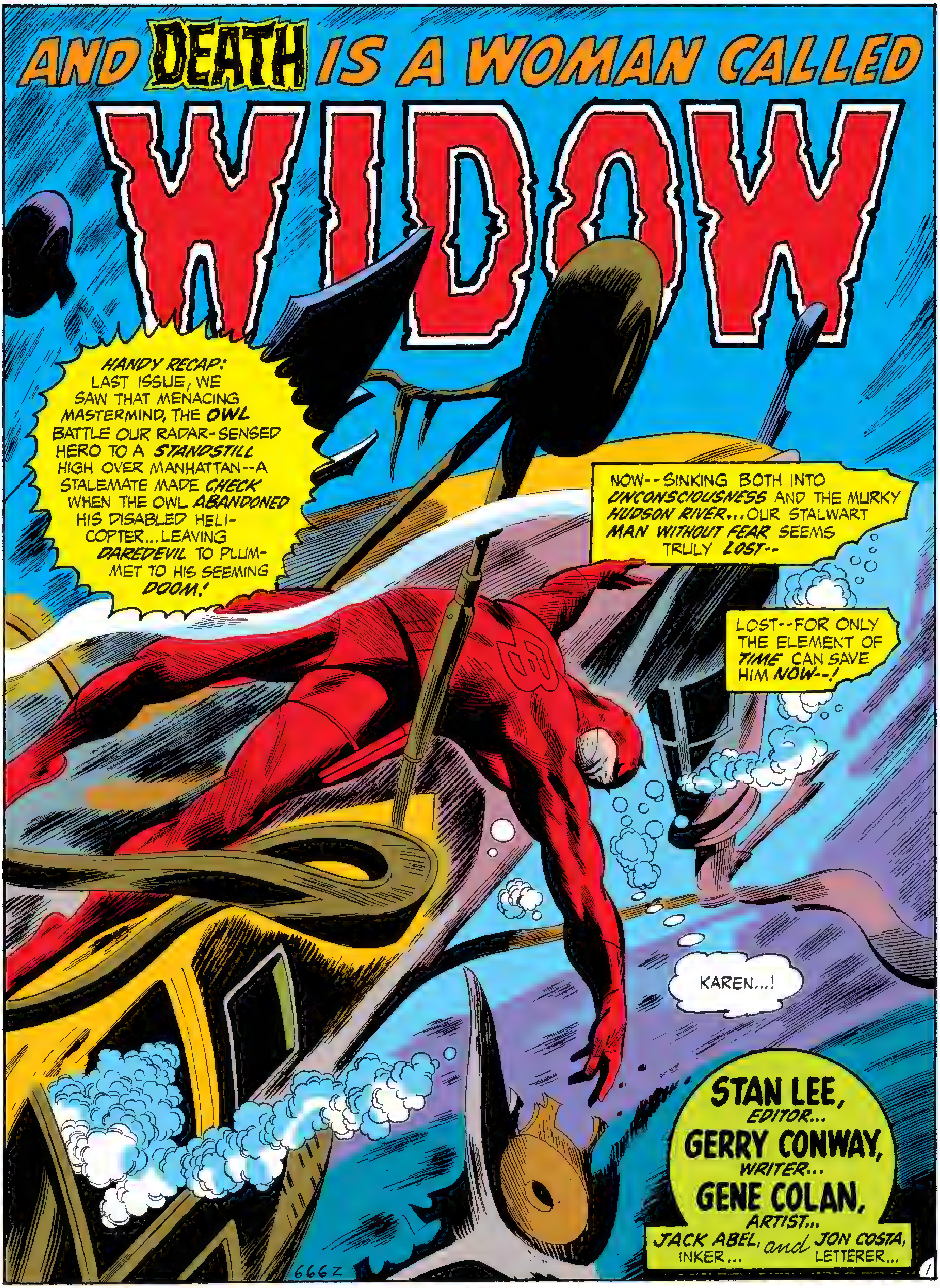
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DAREDEVIL™
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
™
DEATH IS A BLACK WIDOW!


AND DEATH IS A WOMAN CALLED WIDOW
HANDY RECAP: LAST ISSUE, WE SAW THAT MENACING MASTERMIND, THE OWL BATTLE OUR RADAR-SENSED HERO TO A STANDSTILL HIGH OVER MANHATTAN--A STALEMATE MADE CHECK WHEN THE OWL ABANDONED HIS DISABLED HELICOPTER... LEAVING DAREDEVIL TO PLUMMET TO HIS SEEMING DOOM!
NOW--SINKING BOTH INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND THE MURKY HUDSON RIVER... OUR STALWART MAN WITHOUT FEAR SEEMS TRULY LOST--
LOST--FOR ONLY THE ELEMENT OF TIME CAN SAVE HIM NOW--!
KAREN...!
STAN LEE, EDITOR... GERRY CONWAY, WRITER... GENE COLAN, ARTIST... JACK ABEL, INKER... and JON COSTA, LETTERER...
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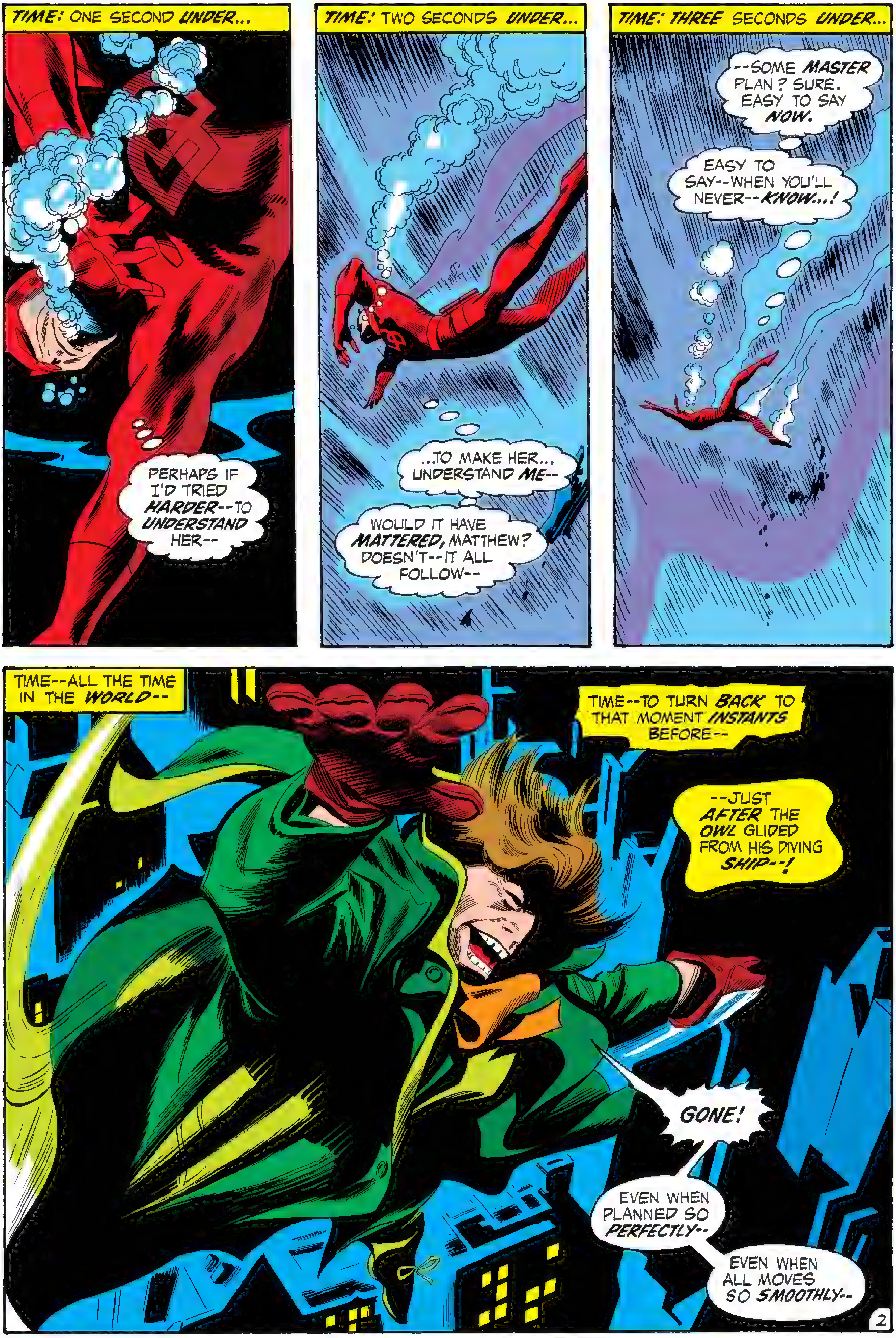
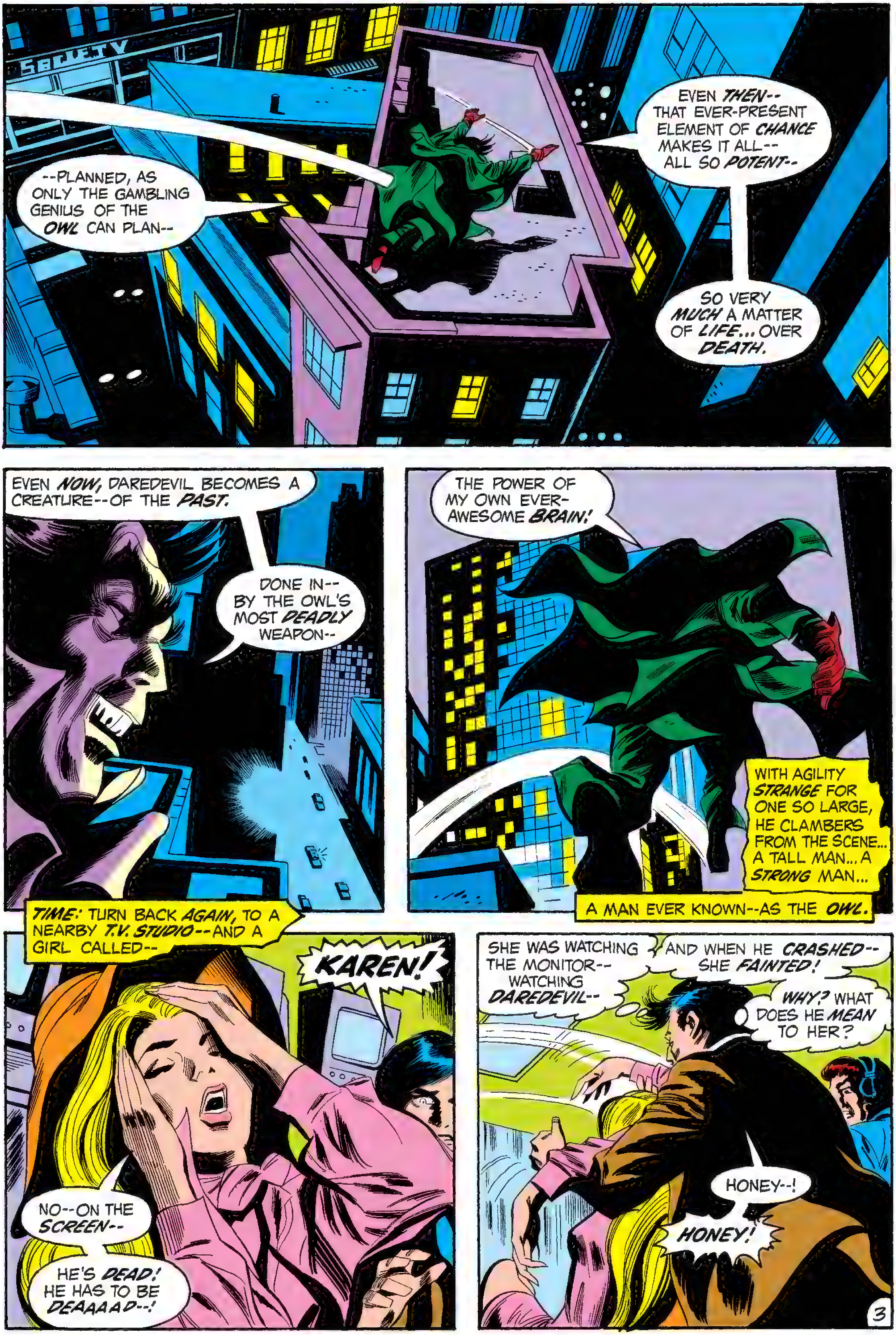
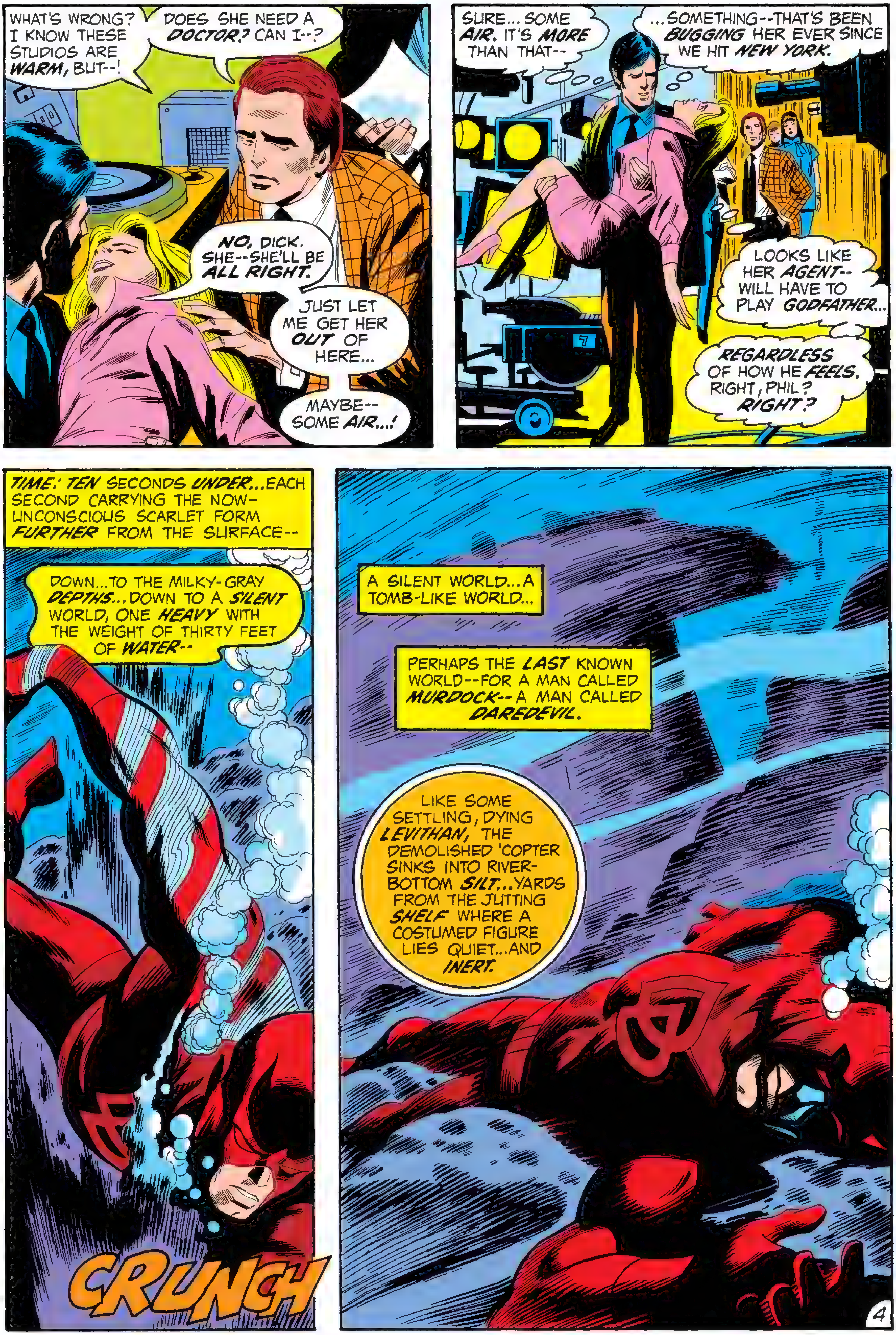
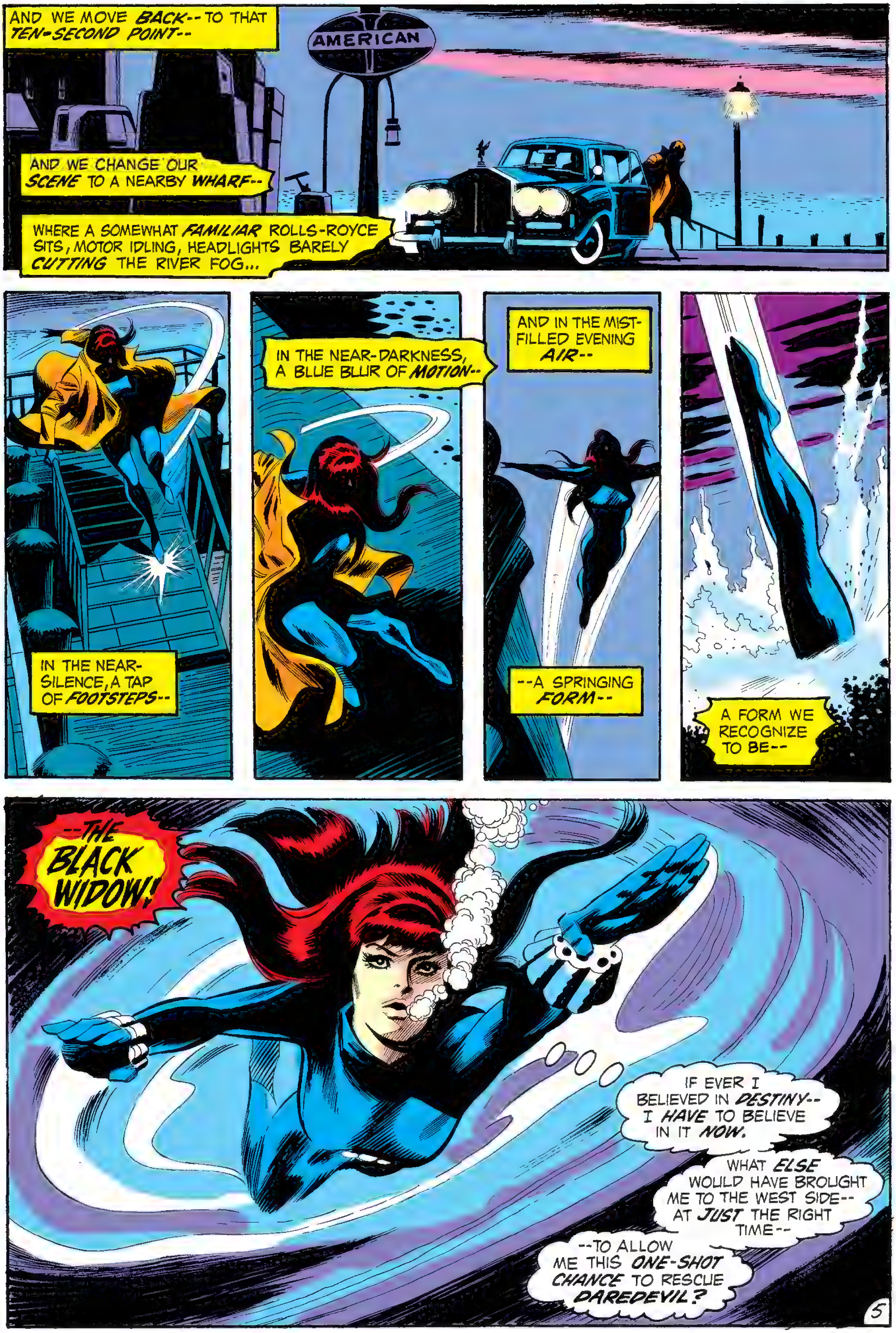
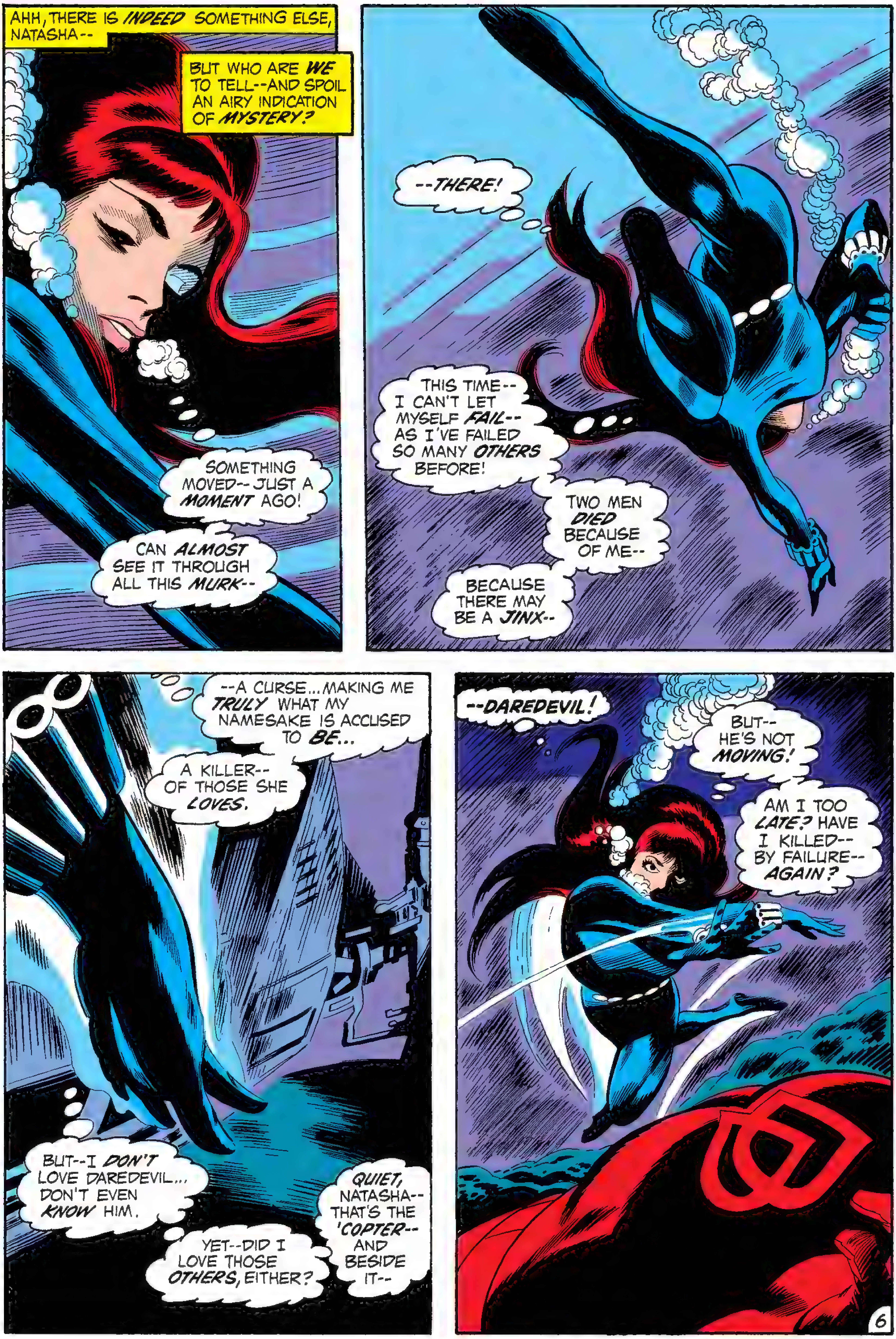
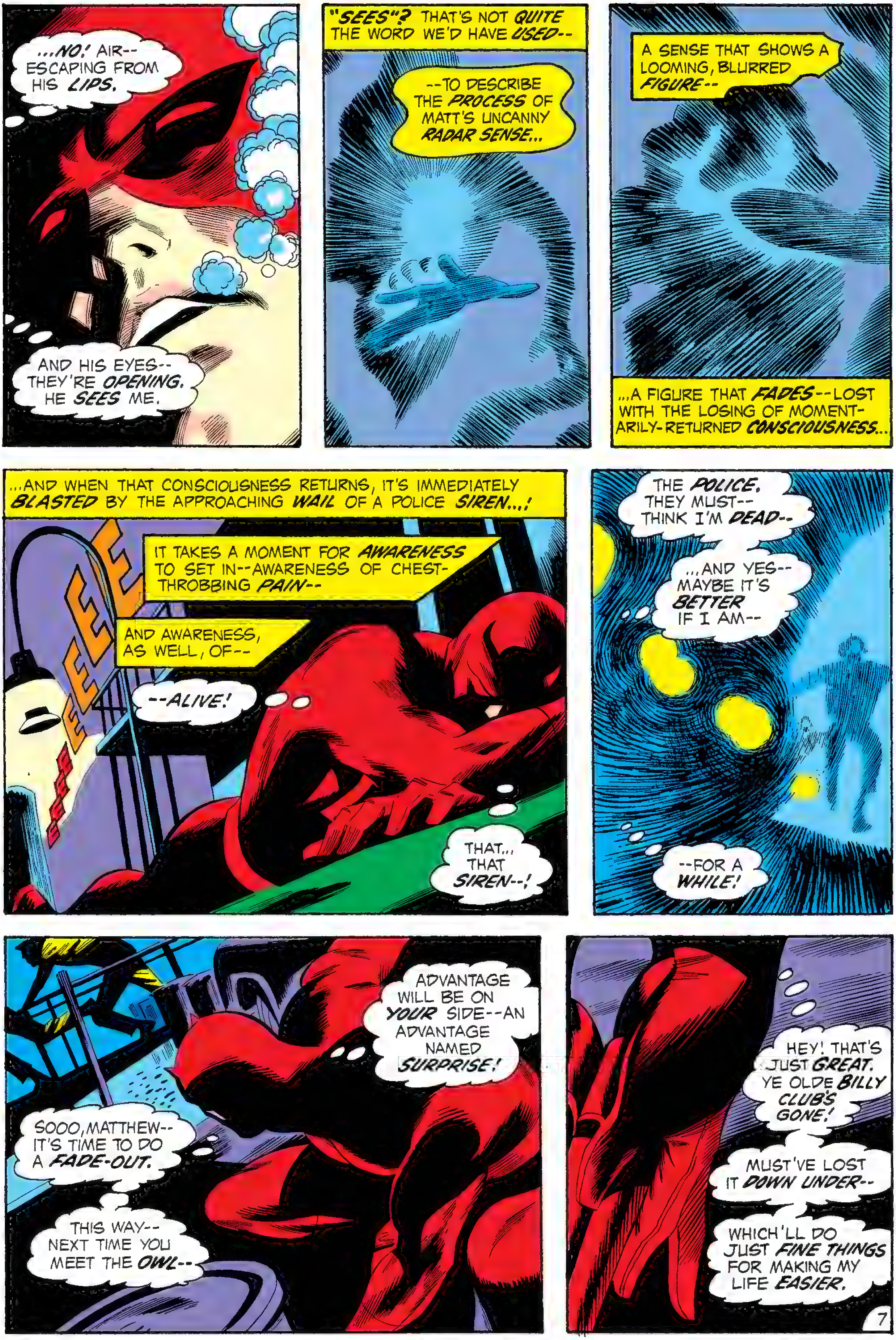

TIME: ONE SECOND UNDER...
PERHAPS IF I'D TRIED HARDER--TO UNDERSTAND HER--
TIME: TWO SECONDS UNDER...
...TO MAKE HER... UNDERSTAND ME--
WOULD IT HAVE MATTERED, MATTHEW? DOESN'T--IT ALL FOLLOW--
TIME: THREE SECONDS UNDER...
--SOME MASTER PLAN? SURE. EASY TO SAY NOW.
EASY TO SAY--WHEN YOU'LL NEVER--KNOW...!
TIME--ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD--
TIME--TO TURN BACK TO THAT MOMENT INSTANTS BEFORE--
--JUST AFTER THE OWL GLIDED FROM HIS DIVING SHIP--!
GONE!
EVEN WHEN PLANNED SO PERFECTLY--
EVEN WHEN ALL MOVES SO SMOOTHLY--

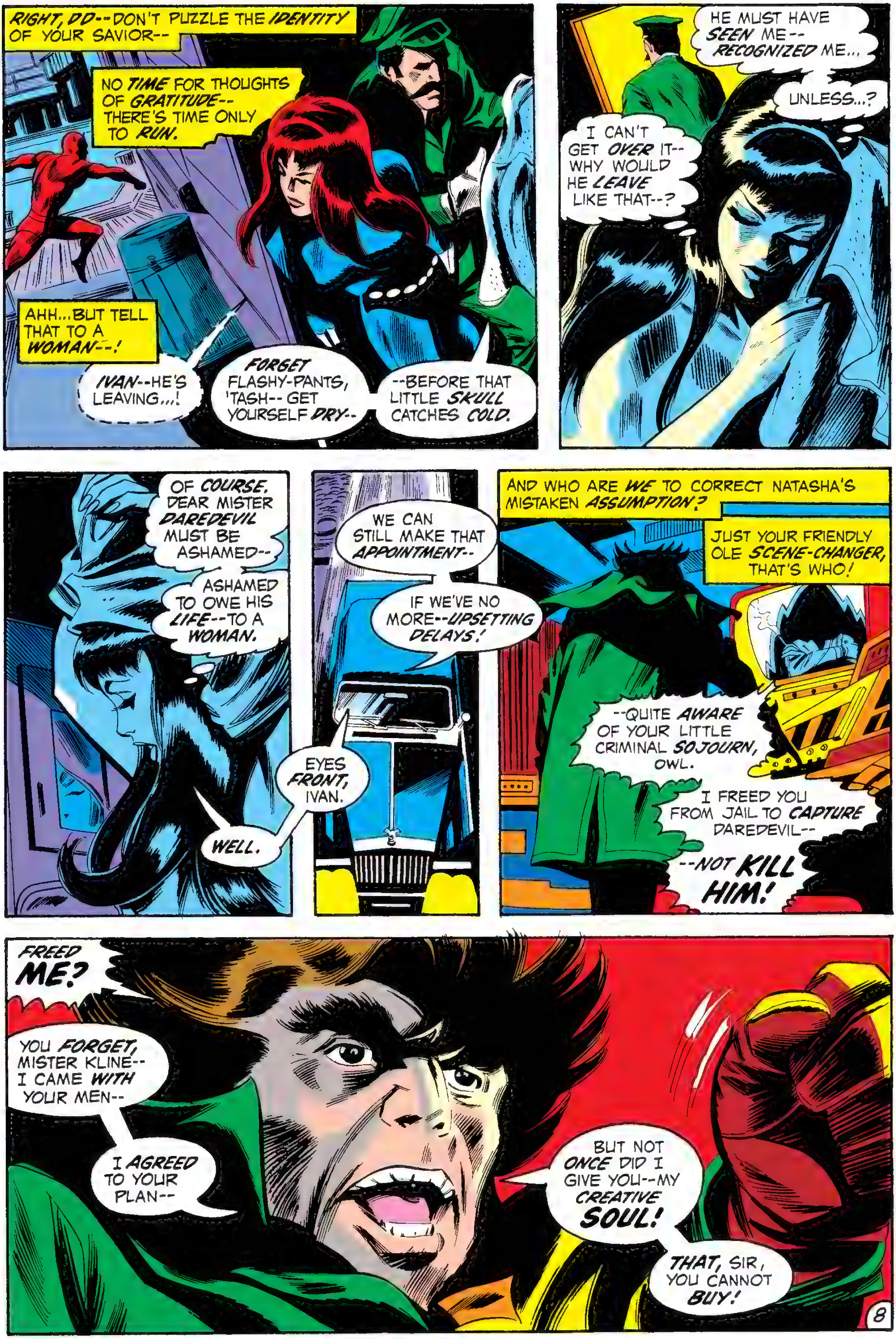

--PLANNED, AS ONLY THE GAMBLING GENIUS OF THE OWL CAN PLAN--
EVEN THEN-- THAT EVER-PRESENT ELEMENT OF CHANCE MAKES IT ALL-- ALL SO POTENT--
SO VERY MUCH A MATTER OF LIFE... OVER DEATH.
EVEN NOW, DAREDEVIL BECOMES A CREATURE--OF THE PAST.
DONE IN-- BY THE OWL'S MOST DEADLY WEAPON--
THE POWER OF MY OWN EVER-AWESOME BRAIN!
WITH AGILITY STRANGE FOR ONE SO LARGE, HE CLAMBERS FROM THE SCENE... A TALL MAN... A STRONG MAN...
A MAN EVER KNOWN--AS THE OWL.
TIME: TURN BACK AGAIN, TO A NEARBY T.V. STUDIO--AND A GIRL CALLED--
KAREN!
NO--ON THE SCREEN--
HE'S DEAD! HE HAS TO BE DEAAAAD--!
SHE WAS WATCHING THE MONITOR-- WATCHING DAREDEVIL--
AND WHEN HE CRASHED-- SHE FAINTED!
WHY? WHAT DOES HE MEAN TO HER?
HONEY--!
HONEY!

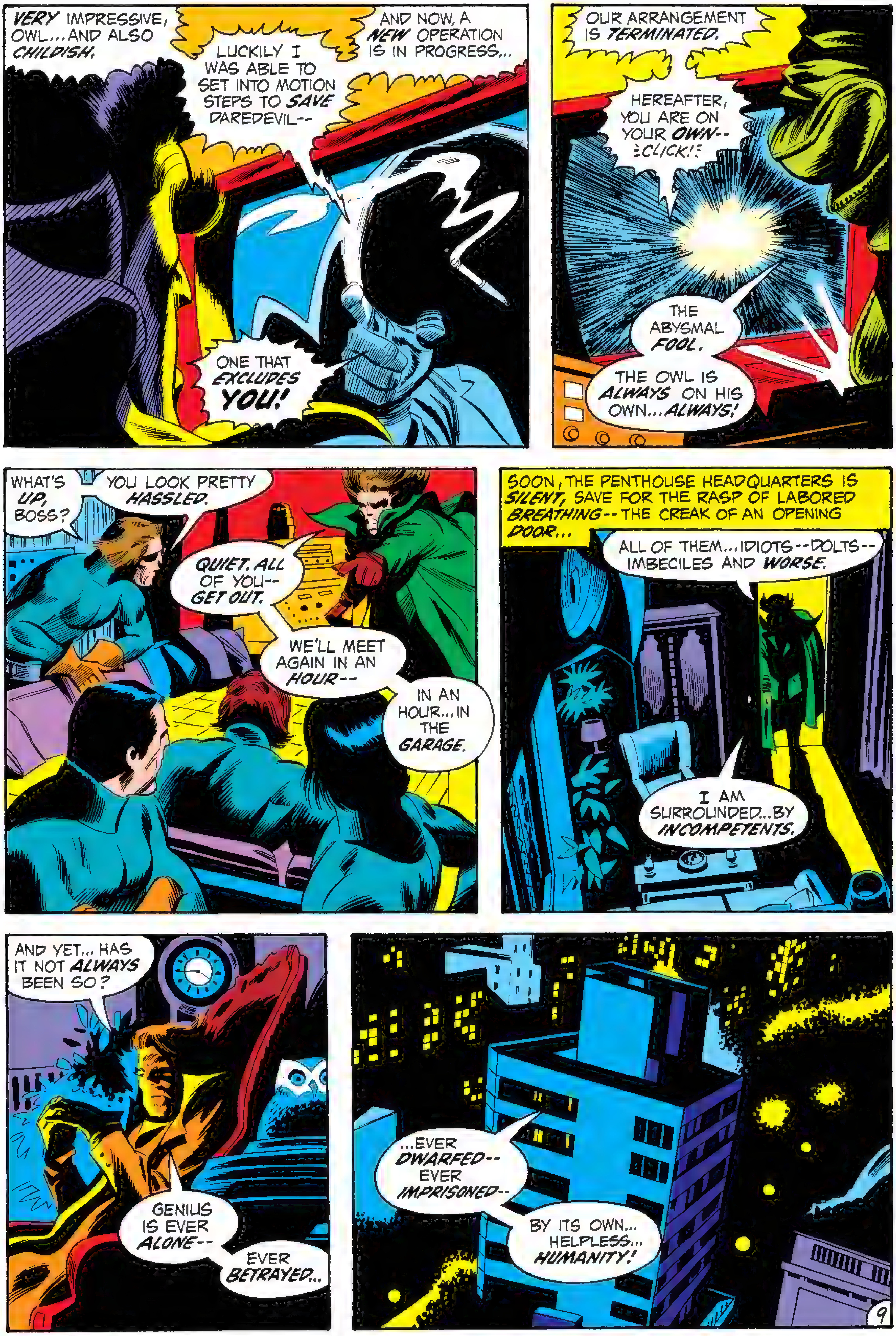

WHAT'S WRONG? I KNOW THESE STUDIOS ARE *WARM*, BUT--!
DOES SHE NEED A *DOCTOR?* CAN I--?
NO, DICK. SHE--SHE'LL BE *ALL RIGHT.*
JUST LET ME GET HER *OUT* OF HERE...
MAYBE--SOME *AIR*...!
SURE... SOME *AIR.* IT'S *MORE* THAN THAT--
...SOMETHING--THAT'S BEEN *BUGGING* HER EVER SINCE WE HIT *NEW YORK.*
LOOKS LIKE HER *AGENT*--WILL HAVE TO PLAY *GODFATHER*...
REGARDLESS OF HOW HE *FEELS.* RIGHT, PHIL? *RIGHT?*
TIME: TEN SECONDS *UNDER*...EACH SECOND CARRYING THE NOW-UNCONSCIOUS SCARLET FORM *FURTHER* FROM THE SURFACE--
DOWN...TO THE MILKY-GRAY *DEPTHS*...DOWN TO A *SILENT* WORLD, ONE *HEAVY* WITH THE WEIGHT OF THIRTY FEET OF *WATER*--
CRUNCH
A SILENT WORLD...A TOMB-LIKE WORLD...
PERHAPS THE *LAST* KNOWN WORLD--FOR A MAN CALLED *MURDOCK*--A MAN CALLED *DAREDEVIL.*
LIKE SOME SETTLING, DYING *LEVITHAN,* THE DEMOLISHED 'COPTER SINKS INTO RIVER-BOTTOM *SILT*...YARDS FROM THE JUTTING *SHELF* WHERE A COSTUMED FIGURE LIES QUIET...AND *INERT.*

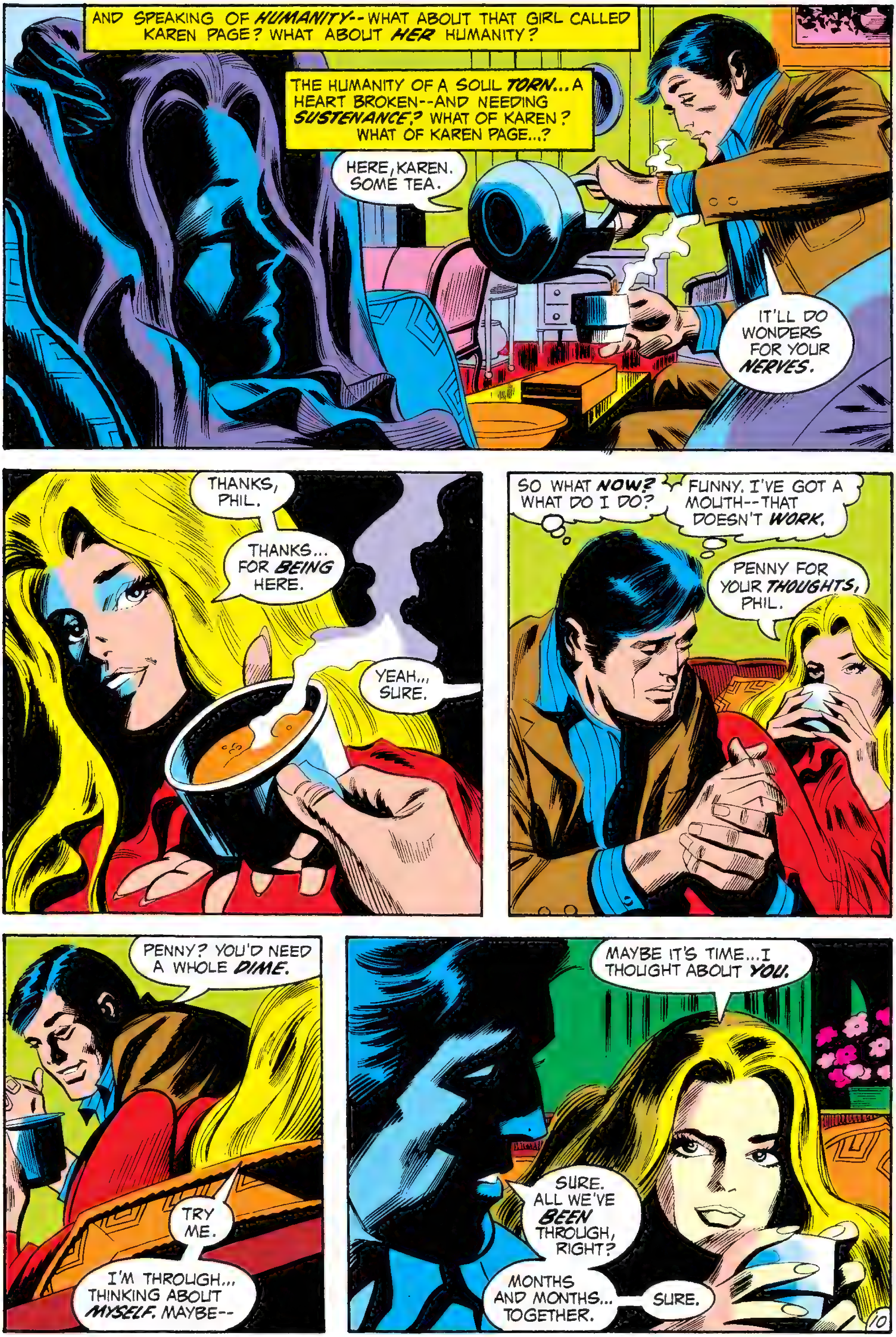

AND WE MOVE BACK-- TO THAT TEN-SECOND POINT--
AMERICAN
AND WE CHANGE OUR SCENE TO A NEARBY WHARF--
WHERE A SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR ROLLS-ROYCE SITS, MOTOR IDLING, HEADLIGHTS BARELY CUTTING THE RIVER FOG...
IN THE NEAR-SILENCE, A TAP OF FOOTSTEPS--
IN THE NEAR-DARKNESS, A BLUE BLUR OF MOTION--
AND IN THE MIST-FILLED EVENING AIR--
--A SPRINGING FORM--
A FORM WE RECOGNIZE TO BE--
--THE BLACK WIDOW!
IF EVER I BELIEVED IN DESTINY-- I HAVE TO BELIEVE IN IT NOW.
WHAT ELSE WOULD HAVE BROUGHT ME TO THE WEST SIDE-- AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME--
--TO ALLOW ME THIS ONE-SHOT CHANCE TO RESCUE DAREDEVIL?

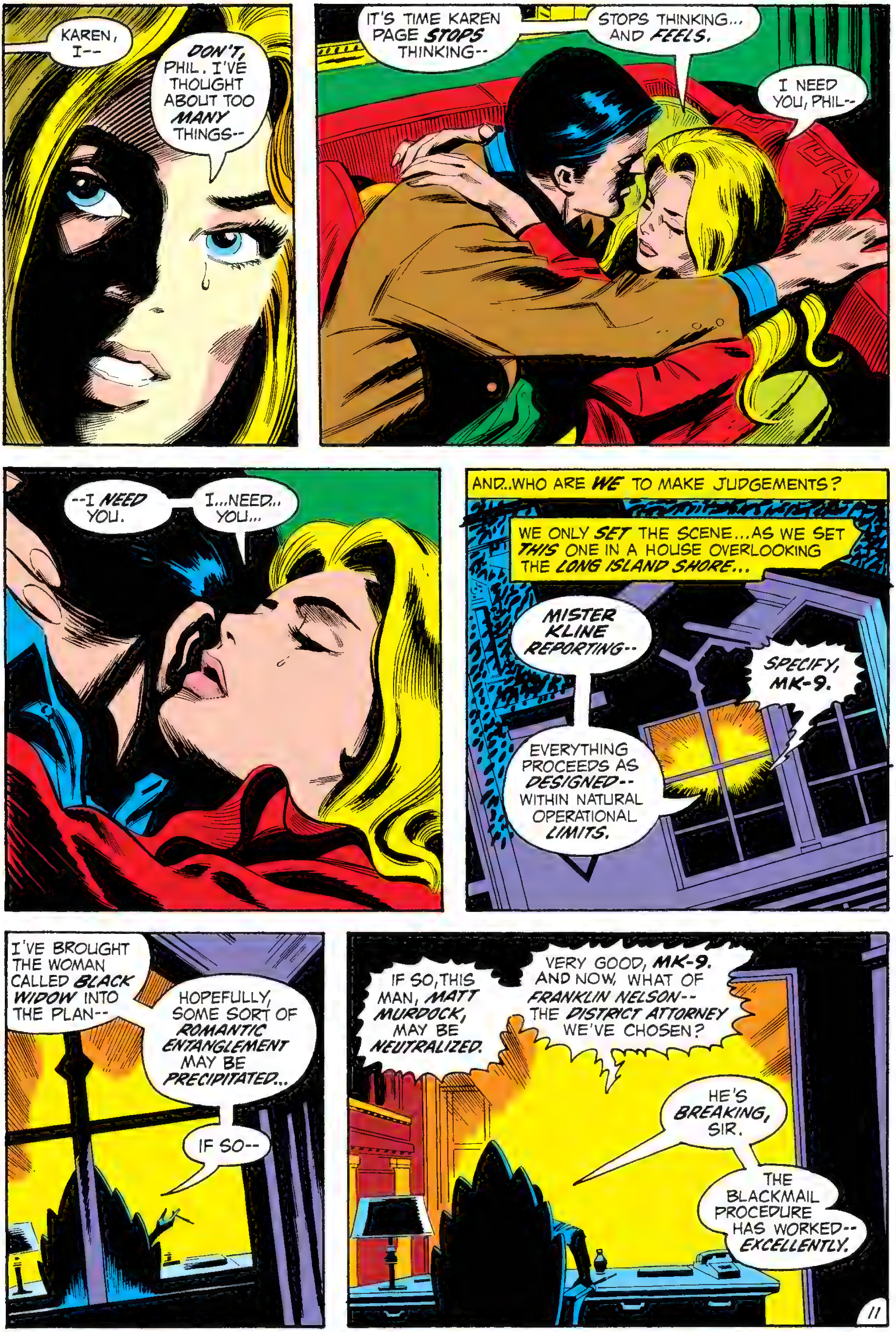

AHH, THERE IS *INDEED* SOMETHING ELSE, NATASHA--
BUT WHO ARE *WE* TO TELL--AND SPOIL AN AIRY INDICATION OF *MYSTERY?*
SOMETHING MOVED--JUST A *MOMENT* AGO!
CAN *ALMOST* SEE IT THROUGH ALL THIS *MURK*--
--*THERE!*
THIS TIME--I CAN'T LET MYSELF *FAIL*--AS I'VE FAILED SO MANY *OTHERS* BEFORE!
TWO MEN *DIED* BECAUSE OF ME--
BECAUSE THERE MAY BE A *JINX*--
--A CURSE...MAKING ME *TRULY* WHAT MY NAMESAKE IS ACCUSED TO *BE*...
A KILLER--OF THOSE SHE *LOVES*.
BUT--I *DON'T* LOVE DAREDEVIL... DON'T EVEN *KNOW* HIM.
YET--DID I LOVE THOSE *OTHERS*, EITHER?
QUIET, NATASHA--THAT'S THE *'COPTER*--AND BESIDE IT--
--*DAREDEVIL!*
BUT--HE'S NOT *MOVING!*
AM I TOO *LATE?* HAVE I KILLED--BY FAILURE--*AGAIN?*

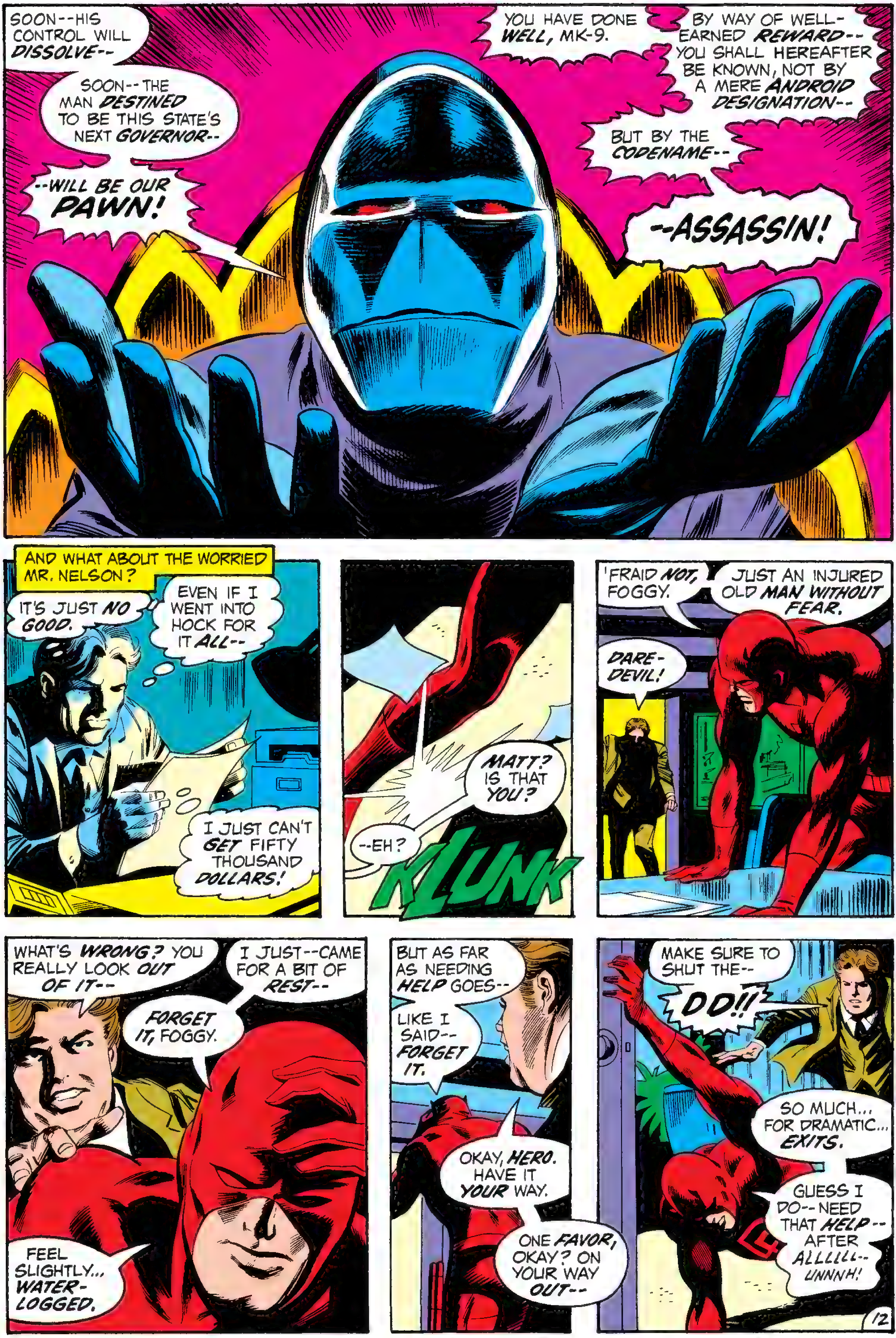

...NO! AIR-- ESCAPING FROM HIS *LIPS*.
AND HIS EYES-- THEY'RE *OPENING*. HE *SEES* ME.
"SEES"? THAT'S NOT *QUITE* THE WORD WE'D HAVE *USED*--
--TO DESCRIBE THE *PROCESS* OF MATT'S UNCANNY *RADAR SENSE*...
A SENSE THAT SHOWS A LOOMING, BLURRED *FIGURE*--
...A FIGURE THAT *FADES*--LOST WITH THE LOSING OF MOMENTARILY-RETURNED *CONSCIOUSNESS*...
...AND WHEN THAT CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS, IT'S IMMEDIATELY *BLASTED* BY THE APPROACHING *WAIL* OF A POLICE *SIREN*...!
IT TAKES A MOMENT FOR *AWARENESS* TO SET IN--AWARENESS OF CHEST-THROBBING *PAIN*--
AND AWARENESS, AS WELL, OF--
--*ALIVE!*
THAT... THAT *SIREN*--!
THE *POLICE*. THEY MUST-- THINK I'M *DEAD*--
...AND YES-- MAYBE IT'S *BETTER* IF I AM--
--FOR A *WHILE!*
ADVANTAGE WILL BE ON *YOUR* SIDE--AN ADVANTAGE NAMED *SURPRISE!*
SOOO, MATTHEW-- IT'S TIME TO DO A *FADE-OUT*.
THIS WAY-- NEXT TIME YOU MEET THE *OWL*--
HEY! THAT'S JUST *GREAT*. YE OLDE *BILLY CLUB'S GONE!*
MUST'VE LOST IT *DOWN UNDER*--
WHICH'LL DO JUST *FINE THINGS* FOR MAKING MY LIFE *EASIER*.

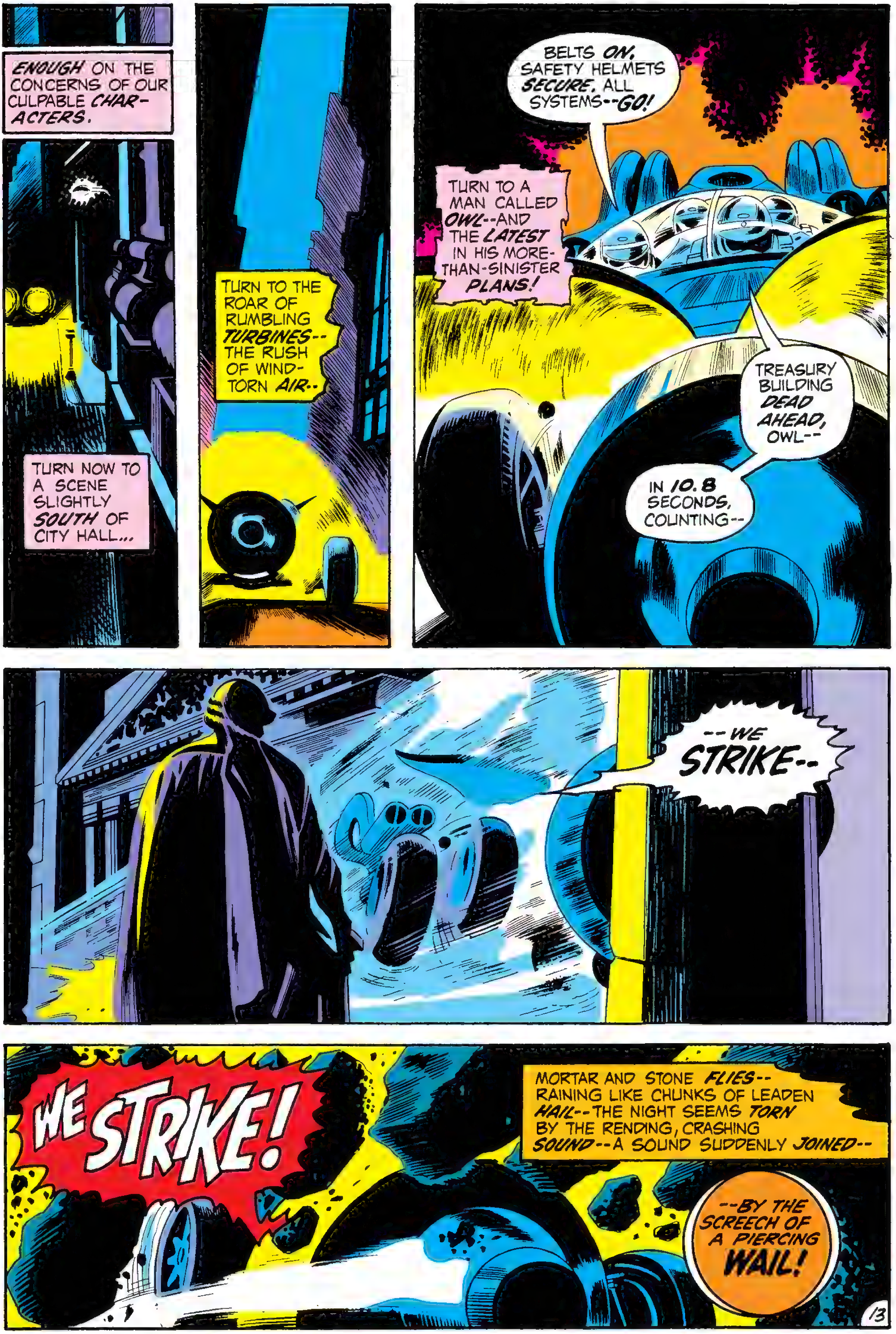

RIGHT, DD--DON'T PUZZLE THE *IDENTITY* OF YOUR SAVIOR--
NO *TIME* FOR THOUGHTS OF *GRATITUDE*--THERE'S TIME ONLY TO *RUN*.
AHH...BUT TELL THAT TO A *WOMAN*--!
IVAN--HE'S LEAVING...!
FORGET FLASHY-PANTS, 'TASH--GET YOURSELF *DRY*--
--BEFORE THAT LITTLE *SKULL* CATCHES *COLD*.
HE MUST HAVE *SEEN* ME--*RECOGNIZED* ME...
UNLESS...?
I CAN'T GET *OVER* IT--WHY WOULD HE *LEAVE* LIKE THAT--?
OF *COURSE*. DEAR MISTER *DAREDEVIL* MUST BE ASHAMED--
ASHAMED TO OWE HIS *LIFE*--TO A *WOMAN*.
WELL.
WE CAN STILL MAKE THAT *APPOINTMENT*--
IF WE'VE NO MORE--*UPSETTING DELAYS*!
EYES *FRONT*, IVAN.
AND WHO ARE *WE* TO CORRECT NATASHA'S MISTAKEN *ASSUMPTION*?
JUST YOUR FRIENDLY OLE *SCENE-CHANGER*, THAT'S WHO!
--QUITE *AWARE* OF YOUR LITTLE CRIMINAL *SOJOURN*, OWL.
I FREED YOU FROM JAIL TO *CAPTURE* DAREDEVIL--
--*NOT KILL HIM!*
FREED ME?
YOU *FORGET*, MISTER KLINE--I CAME *WITH* YOUR MEN--
I *AGREED* TO YOUR PLAN--
BUT NOT *ONCE* DID I GIVE YOU--MY *CREATIVE SOUL!*
THAT, SIR, YOU CANNOT *BUY*!

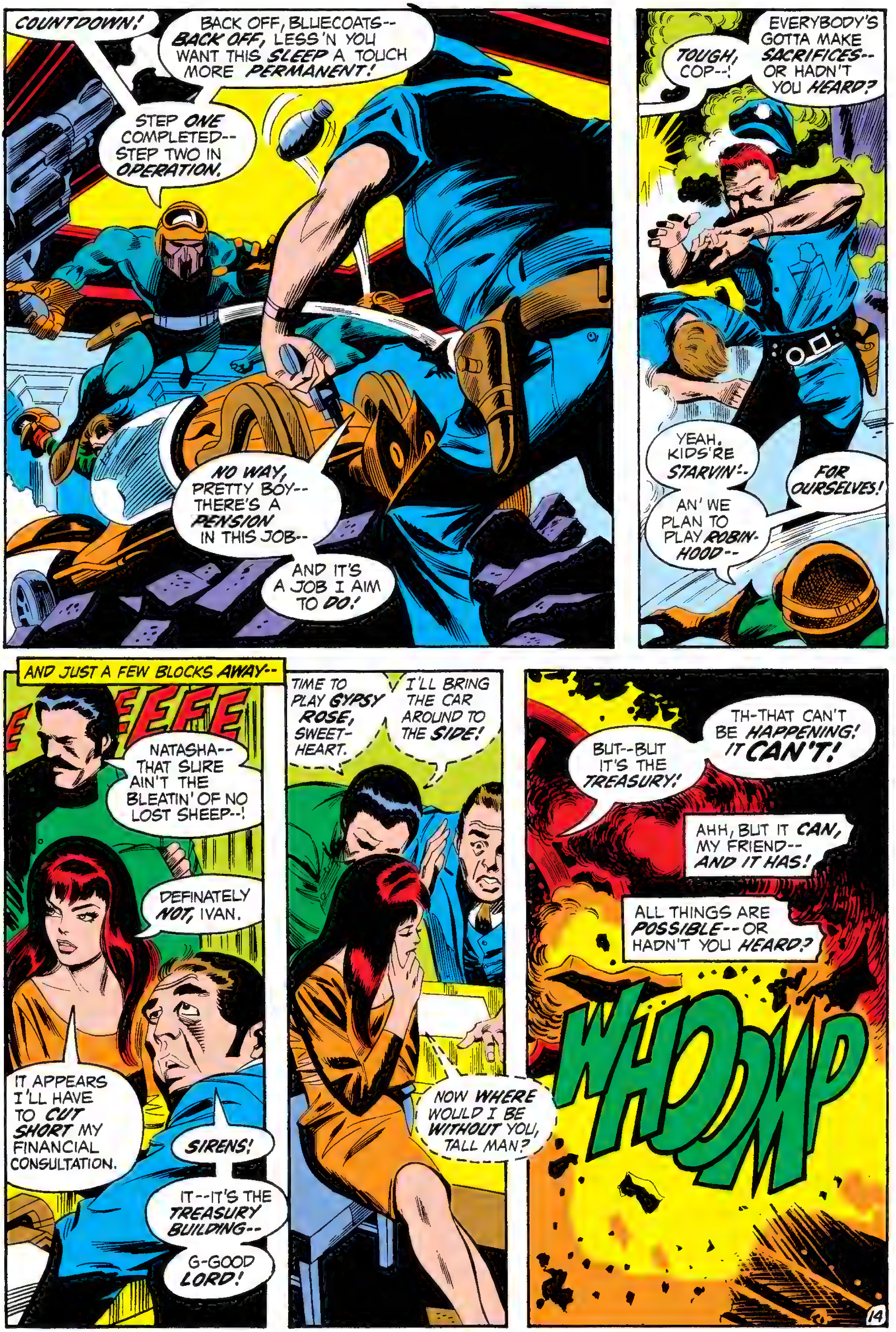

VERY IMPRESSIVE, OWL... AND ALSO CHILDISH.
LUCKILY I WAS ABLE TO SET INTO MOTION STEPS TO SAVE DAREDEVIL--
AND NOW, A NEW OPERATION IS IN PROGRESS...
ONE THAT EXCLUDES YOU!
OUR ARRANGEMENT IS TERMINATED.
HEREAFTER, YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN-- CLICK!
THE ABYSMAL FOOL.
THE OWL IS ALWAYS ON HIS OWN... ALWAYS!
WHAT'S UP, BOSS?
YOU LOOK PRETTY HASSLED.
QUIET. ALL OF YOU-- GET OUT.
WE'LL MEET AGAIN IN AN HOUR--
IN AN HOUR... IN THE GARAGE.
SOON, THE PENTHOUSE HEADQUARTERS IS SILENT, SAVE FOR THE RASP OF LABORED BREATHING-- THE CREAK OF AN OPENING DOOR...
ALL OF THEM... IDIOTS--DOLTS-- IMBECILES AND WORSE.
I AM SURROUNDED... BY INCOMPETENTS.
AND YET... HAS IT NOT ALWAYS BEEN SO?
GENIUS IS EVER ALONE--
EVER BETRAYED...
...EVER DWARFED-- EVER IMPRISONED--
BY ITS OWN... HELPLESS... HUMANITY!

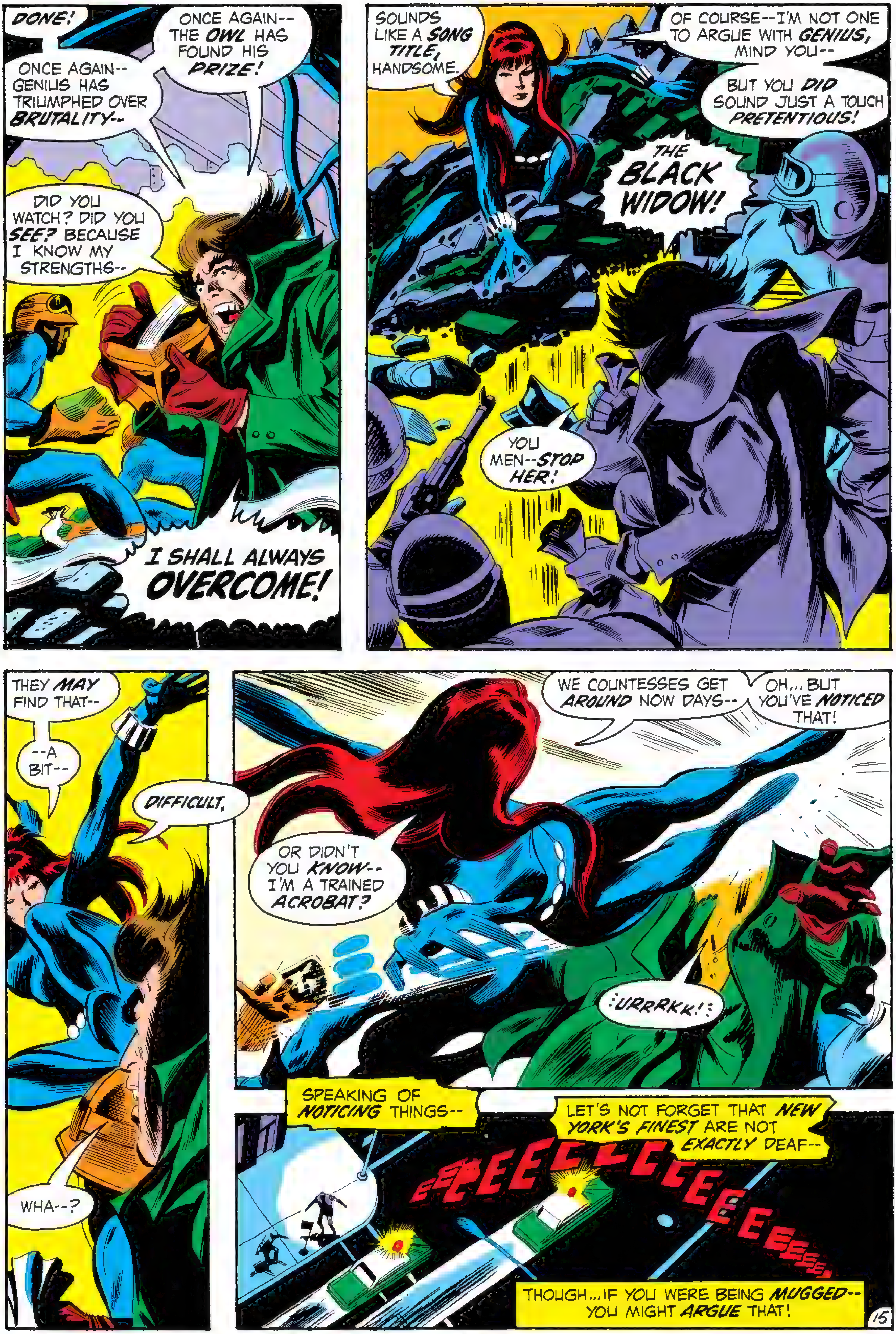

AND SPEAKING OF *HUMANITY*--WHAT ABOUT THAT GIRL CALLED KAREN PAGE? WHAT ABOUT *HER* HUMANITY?
THE HUMANITY OF A SOUL *TORN*...A HEART BROKEN--AND NEEDING *SUSTENANCE*? WHAT OF KAREN? WHAT OF KAREN PAGE...?
HERE, KAREN. SOME TEA.
IT'LL DO WONDERS FOR YOUR *NERVES*.
THANKS, PHIL.
THANKS... FOR *BEING* HERE.
YEAH... SURE.
SO WHAT *NOW*? WHAT DO I DO?
FUNNY. I'VE GOT A MOUTH--THAT DOESN'T *WORK*.
PENNY FOR YOUR *THOUGHTS*, PHIL.
PENNY? YOU'D NEED A WHOLE *DIME*.
TRY ME.
I'M THROUGH... THINKING ABOUT *MYSELF*. MAYBE--
MAYBE IT'S TIME...I THOUGHT ABOUT *YOU*.
SURE. ALL WE'VE *BEEN* THROUGH, RIGHT?
MONTHS AND MONTHS... TOGETHER.
SURE.

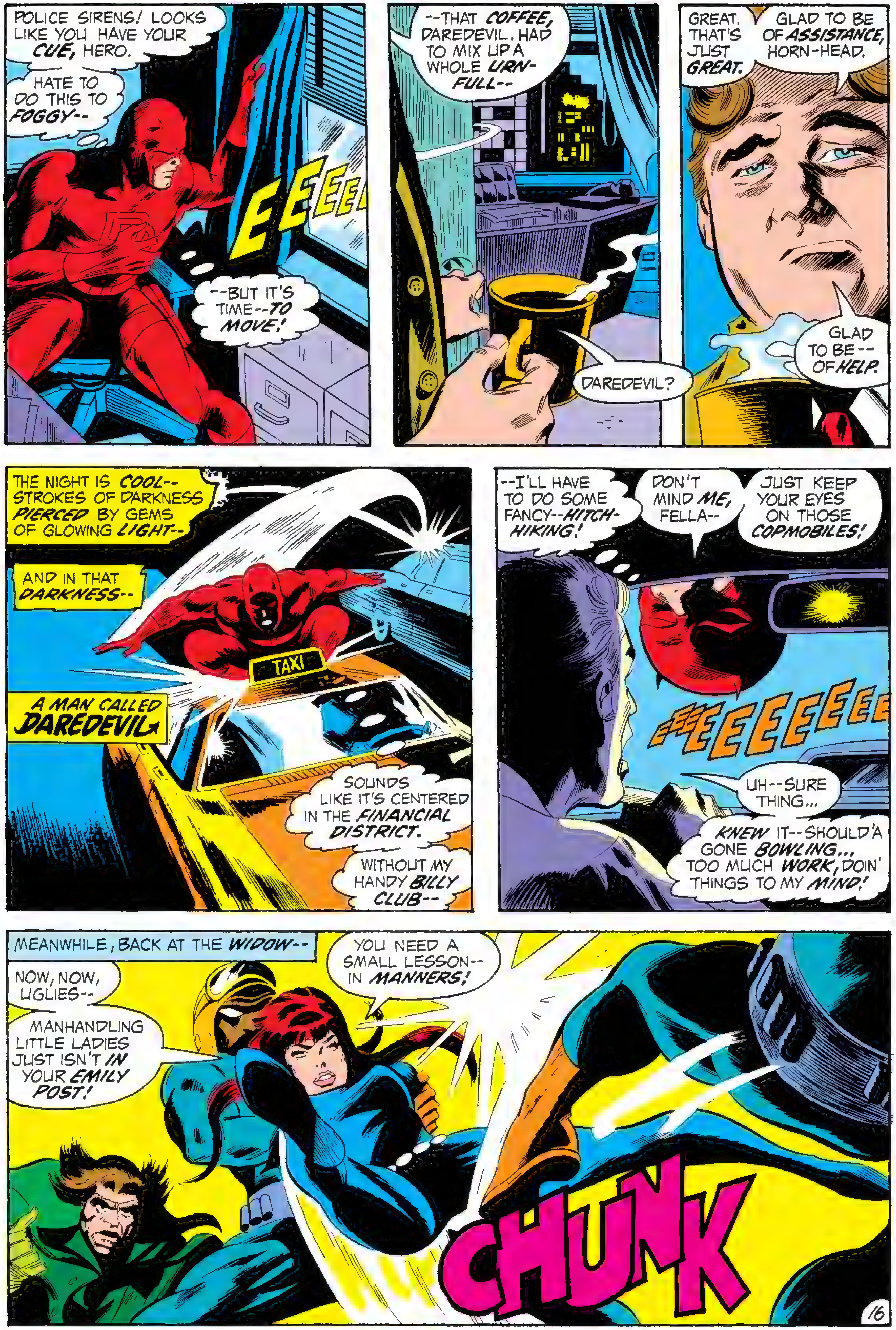

KAREN, I--
DON'T, PHIL. I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT TOO *MANY* THINGS--
IT'S TIME KAREN PAGE *STOPS* THINKING--
STOPS THINKING... AND *FEELS.*
I NEED YOU, PHIL--
--I *NEED* YOU.
I...NEED... YOU...
AND...WHO ARE *WE* TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS?
WE ONLY *SET* THE SCENE...AS WE SET *THIS* ONE IN A HOUSE OVERLOOKING THE *LONG ISLAND SHORE...*
MISTER KLINE REPORTING--
SPECIFY, MK-9.
EVERYTHING PROCEEDS AS *DESIGNED--* WITHIN NATURAL OPERATIONAL *LIMITS.*
I'VE BROUGHT THE WOMAN CALLED *BLACK WIDOW* INTO THE PLAN--
HOPEFULLY, SOME SORT OF *ROMANTIC ENTANGLEMENT* MAY BE *PRECIPITATED...*
IF SO--
IF SO, THIS MAN, *MATT MURDOCK,* MAY BE *NEUTRALIZED.*
VERY GOOD, *MK-9.* AND NOW, WHAT OF *FRANKLIN NELSON--* THE *DISTRICT ATTORNEY* WE'VE CHOSEN?
HE'S *BREAKING,* SIR.
THE BLACKMAIL PROCEDURE HAS WORKED-- *EXCELLENTLY.*

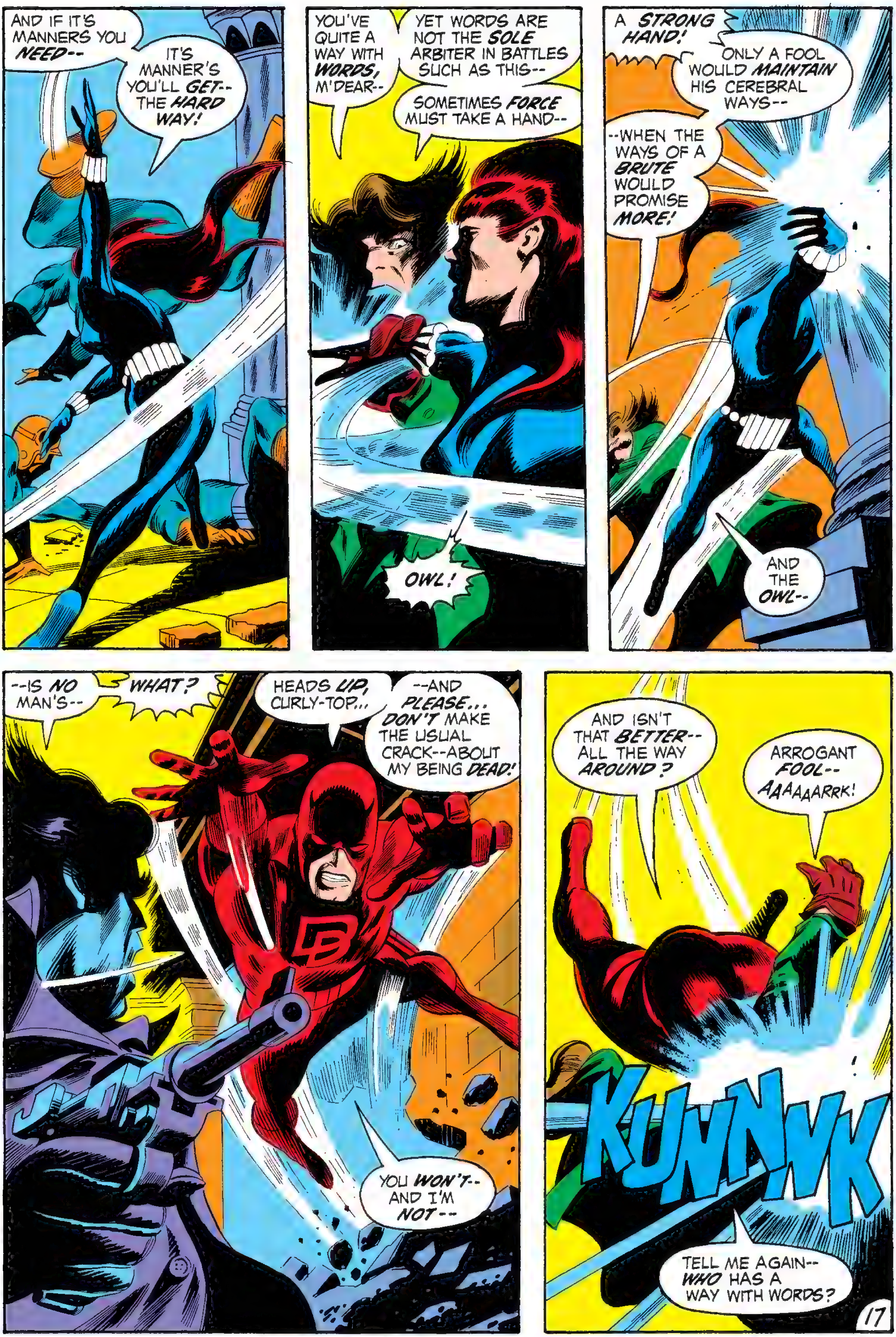

SOON--HIS CONTROL WILL DISSOLVE--
SOON--THE MAN DESTINED TO BE THIS STATE'S NEXT GOVERNOR--
--WILL BE OUR PAWN!
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, MK-9.
BY WAY OF WELL-EARNED REWARD--YOU SHALL HEREAFTER BE KNOWN, NOT BY A MERE ANDROID DESIGNATION--
BUT BY THE CODENAME--
--ASSASSIN!
AND WHAT ABOUT THE WORRIED MR. NELSON?
IT'S JUST NO GOOD.
EVEN IF I WENT INTO HOCK FOR IT ALL--
I JUST CAN'T GET FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!
MATT? IS THAT YOU?
--EH?
KLUNK
'FRAID NOT, FOGGY.
JUST AN INJURED OLD MAN WITHOUT FEAR.
DARE-DEVIL!
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU REALLY LOOK OUT OF IT--
I JUST--CAME FOR A BIT OF REST--
FORGET IT, FOGGY.
FEEL SLIGHTLY... WATER-LOGGED.
BUT AS FAR AS NEEDING HELP GOES--
LIKE I SAID--FORGET IT.
OKAY, HERO. HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
ONE FAVOR, OKAY? ON YOUR WAY OUT--
MAKE SURE TO SHUT THE--
DD!!
SO MUCH... FOR DRAMATIC... EXITS.
GUESS I DO--NEED THAT HELP--AFTER ALLLLLL--UNNNH!

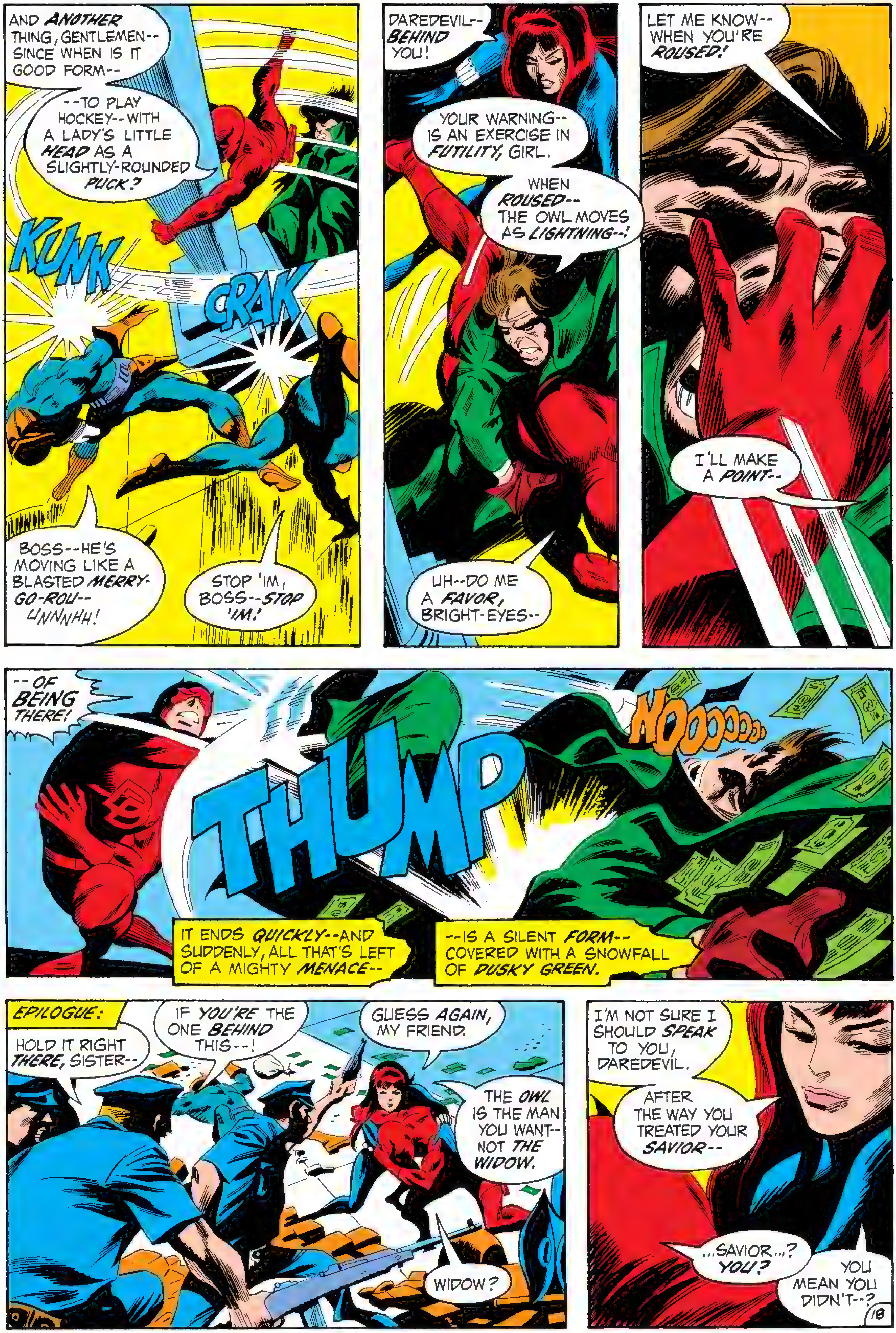

ENOUGH ON THE CONCERNS OF OUR CULPABLE CHARACTERS.
TURN NOW TO A SCENE SLIGHTLY SOUTH OF CITY HALL...
TURN TO THE ROAR OF RUMBLING TURBINES--THE RUSH OF WIND-TORN AIR--
TURN TO A MAN CALLED OWL--AND THE LATEST IN HIS MORE-THAN-SINISTER PLANS!
BELTS ON, SAFETY HELMETS SECURE. ALL SYSTEMS--GO!
TREASURY BUILDING DEAD AHEAD, OWL--
IN 10.8 SECONDS, COUNTING--
--WE STRIKE--
WE STRIKE!
MORTAR AND STONE FLIES--RAINING LIKE CHUNKS OF LEADEN HAIL--THE NIGHT SEEMS TORN BY THE RENDING, CRASHING SOUND--A SOUND SUDDENLY JOINED--
--BY THE SCREECH OF A PIERCING WAIL!

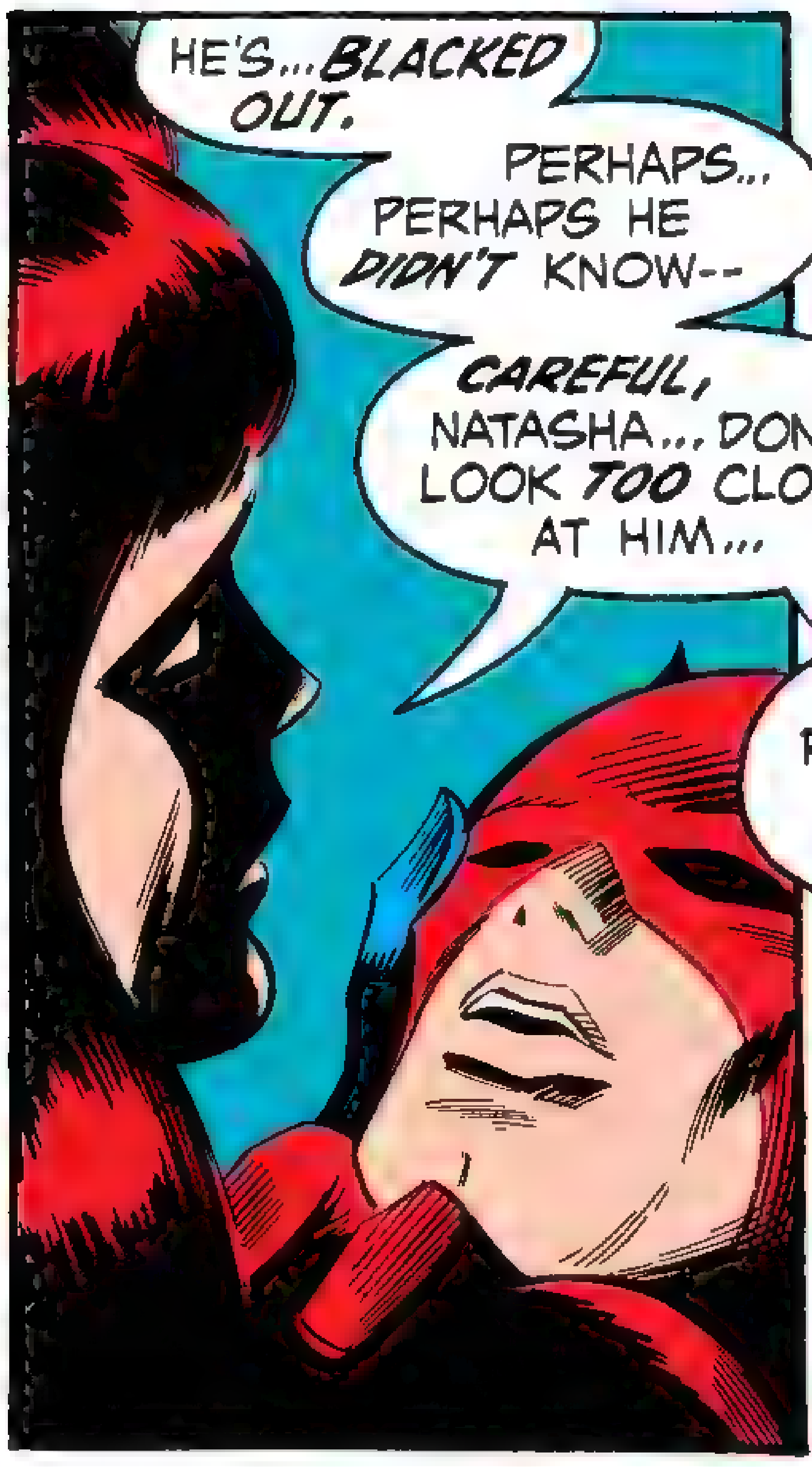

COUNTDOWN!
BACK OFF, BLUECOATS-- BACK OFF, LESS'N YOU WANT THIS SLEEP A TOUCH MORE PERMANENT!
STEP ONE COMPLETED-- STEP TWO IN OPERATION.
NO WAY, PRETTY BOY-- THERE'S A PENSION IN THIS JOB--
AND IT'S A JOB I AIM TO DO!
TOUGH, COP--!
EVERYBODY'S GOTTA MAKE SACRIFICES-- OR HADN'T YOU HEARD?
YEAH. KIDS'RE STARVIN'--
AN' WE PLAN TO PLAY ROBIN-HOOD--
FOR OURSELVES!
AND JUST A FEW BLOCKS AWAY--
EEEEE
NATASHA-- THAT SURE AIN'T THE BLEATIN' OF NO LOST SHEEP--!
DEFINATELY NOT, IVAN.
IT APPEARS I'LL HAVE TO CUT SHORT MY FINANCIAL CONSULTATION.
SIRENS!
IT--IT'S THE TREASURY BUILDING--
G-GOOD LORD!
TIME TO PLAY GYPSY ROSE, SWEET-HEART.
I'LL BRING THE CAR AROUND TO THE SIDE!
NOW WHERE WOULD I BE WITHOUT YOU, TALL MAN?
BUT--BUT IT'S THE TREASURY!
TH-THAT CAN'T BE HAPPENING! IT CAN'T!
AHH, BUT IT CAN, MY FRIEND-- AND IT HAS!
ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE--OR HADN'T YOU HEARD?
WHOOMP

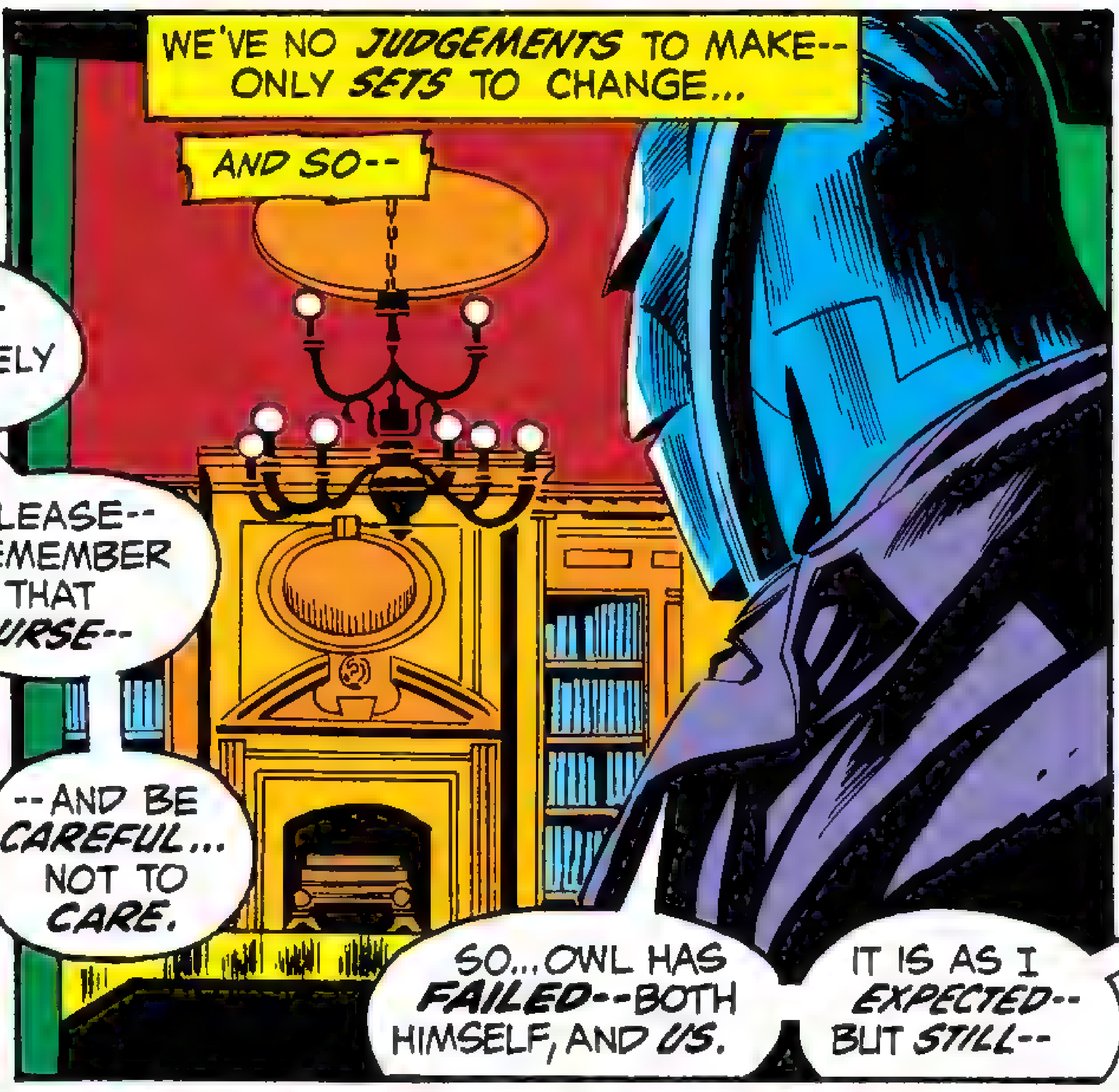

DONE!
ONCE AGAIN--GENIUS HAS TRIUMPHED OVER BRUTALITY--
ONCE AGAIN--THE OWL HAS FOUND HIS PRIZE!
DID YOU WATCH? DID YOU SEE? BECAUSE I KNOW MY STRENGTHS--
I SHALL ALWAYS OVERCOME!
SOUNDS LIKE A SONG TITLE, HANDSOME.
OF COURSE--I'M NOT ONE TO ARGUE WITH GENIUS, MIND YOU--
BUT YOU DID SOUND JUST A TOUCH PRETENTIOUS!
THE BLACK WIDOW!
YOU MEN--STOP HER!
THEY MAY FIND THAT--
--A BIT--
DIFFICULT.
WHA--?
WE COUNTESSES GET AROUND NOW DAYS--
OH... BUT YOU'VE NOTICED THAT!
OR DIDN'T YOU KNOW--I'M A TRAINED ACROBAT?
URRRKK!
SPEAKING OF NOTICING THINGS--
LET'S NOT FORGET THAT NEW YORK'S FINEST ARE NOT EXACTLY DEAF--
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
THOUGH... IF YOU WERE BEING MUGGED--YOU MIGHT ARGUE THAT!

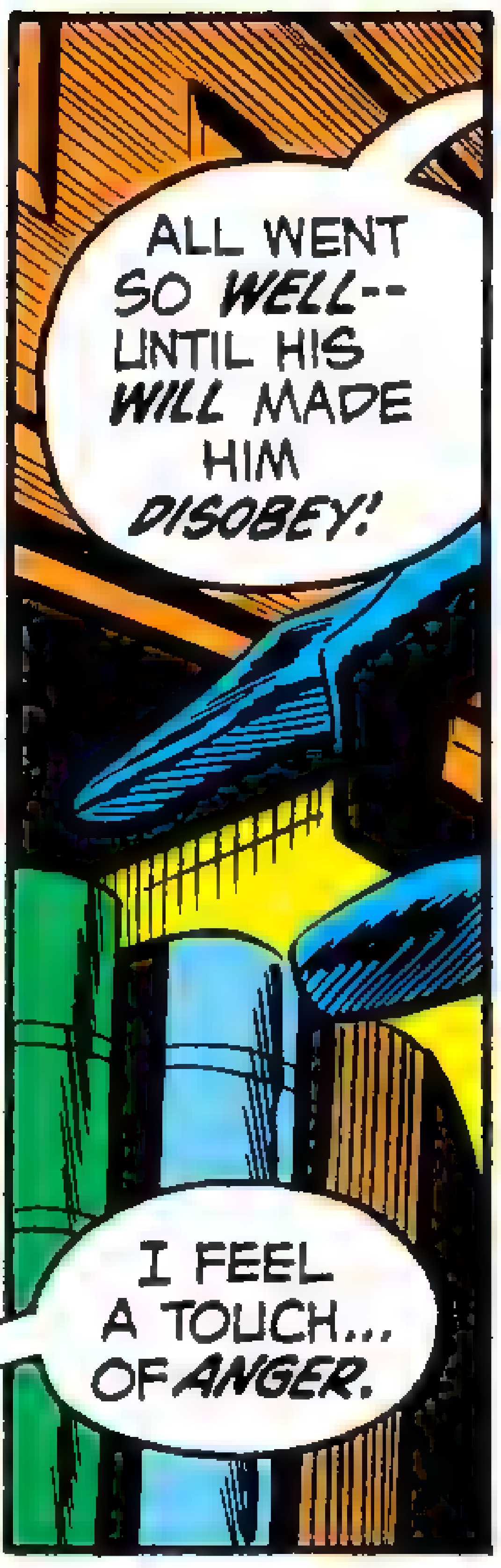

POLICE SIRENS! LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE YOUR *CUE,* HERO.
HATE TO DO THIS TO *FOGGY*--
EEEEE
--BUT IT'S TIME--*TO MOVE!*
--THAT *COFFEE,* DAREDEVIL. HAD TO MIX UP A WHOLE *URN-FULL*--
DAREDEVIL?
GREAT. THAT'S JUST *GREAT.*
GLAD TO BE OF *ASSISTANCE,* HORN-HEAD.
GLAD TO BE-- OF *HELP.*
THE NIGHT IS *COOL*-- STROKES OF DARKNESS *PIERCED* BY GEMS OF GLOWING *LIGHT*--
AND IN THAT *DARKNESS*--
A MAN CALLED DAREDEVIL!
TAXI
SOUNDS LIKE IT'S CENTERED IN THE *FINANCIAL DISTRICT.*
WITHOUT MY HANDY *BILLY CLUB*--
--I'LL HAVE TO DO SOME FANCY--*HITCH-HIKING!*
DON'T MIND *ME,* FELLA--
JUST KEEP YOUR EYES ON THOSE *COPMOBILES!*
EEEEEEEEEE
UH--SURE THING...
KNEW IT--SHOULD'A GONE *BOWLING*... TOO MUCH *WORK,* DOIN' THINGS TO MY *MIND!*
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE *WIDOW*--
NOW, NOW, UGLIES--
MANHANDLING LITTLE LADIES JUST ISN'T *IN* YOUR *EMILY POST!*
YOU NEED A SMALL LESSON-- IN *MANNERS!*
CHUNK

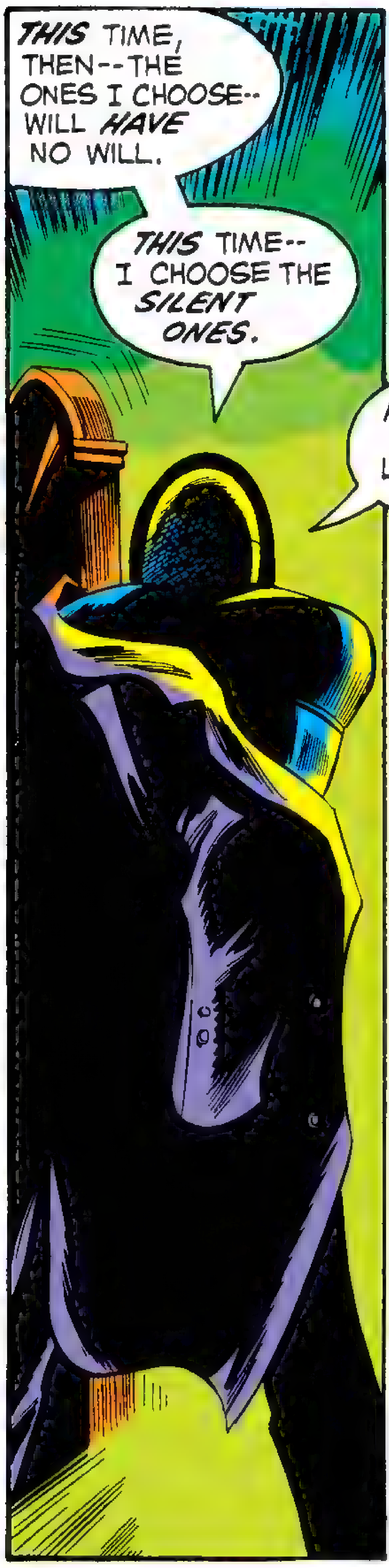

AND IF IT'S MANNERS YOU *NEED*--
IT'S MANNER'S YOU'LL *GET*-- THE *HARD WAY!*
YOU'VE QUITE A WAY WITH *WORDS,* M'DEAR--
YET WORDS ARE NOT THE *SOLE* ARBITER IN BATTLES SUCH AS THIS--
SOMETIMES *FORCE* MUST TAKE A HAND--
OWL!
A *STRONG HAND!*
ONLY A FOOL WOULD *MAINTAIN* HIS CEREBRAL WAYS--
--WHEN THE WAYS OF A *BRUTE* WOULD PROMISE *MORE!*
AND THE *OWL*--
--IS *NO* MAN'S--
WHAT?
HEADS *UP,* CURLY-TOP...
--AND *PLEASE... DON'T* MAKE THE USUAL CRACK--ABOUT MY BEING *DEAD!*
YOU *WON'T*-- AND I'M *NOT*--
AND ISN'T THAT *BETTER*-- ALL THE WAY *AROUND?*
ARROGANT *FOOL*-- AAAAAARRK!
KUNNNK
TELL ME AGAIN-- *WHO* HAS A WAY WITH WORDS?

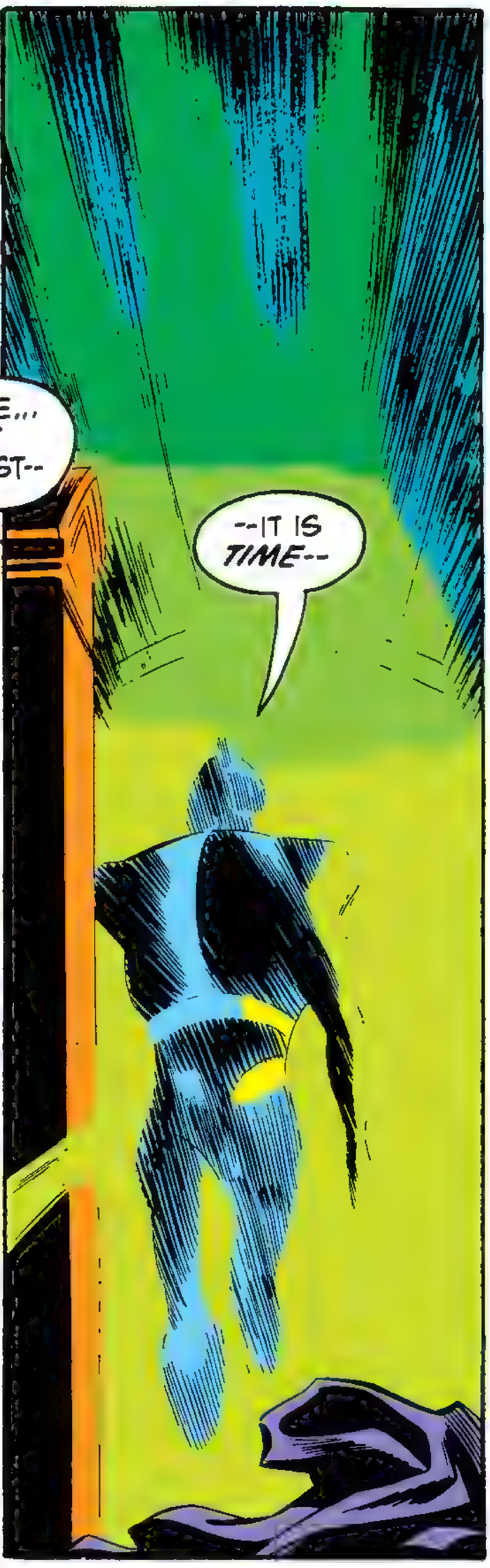

AND *ANOTHER* THING, GENTLEMEN--SINCE WHEN IS IT GOOD FORM--
--TO PLAY HOCKEY--WITH A LADY'S LITTLE *HEAD* AS A SLIGHTLY-ROUNDED *PUCK?*
KUNK
CRAK
BOSS--HE'S MOVING LIKE A BLASTED *MERRY-GO-ROU--* UNNNHH!
STOP 'IM, BOSS--*STOP* 'IM!
DAREDEVIL--*BEHIND* YOU!
YOUR WARNING--IS AN EXERCISE IN *FUTILITY,* GIRL.
WHEN *ROUSED*--THE OWL MOVES AS *LIGHTNING*--!
UH--DO ME A *FAVOR,* BRIGHT-EYES--
LET ME KNOW--WHEN YOU'RE *ROUSED!*
I'LL MAKE A *POINT*--
--OF *BEING THERE!*
THUMP
NOOOOOO
IT ENDS *QUICKLY*--AND SUDDENLY, ALL THAT'S LEFT OF A MIGHTY *MENACE*--
--IS A SILENT *FORM*--COVERED WITH A SNOWFALL OF *DUSKY GREEN.*
EPILOGUE:
HOLD IT RIGHT *THERE,* SISTER--
IF *YOU'RE* THE ONE *BEHIND* THIS--!
GUESS *AGAIN,* MY FRIEND.
THE *OWL* IS THE MAN YOU WANT--NOT *THE WIDOW.*
WIDOW?
I'M NOT SURE I SHOULD *SPEAK* TO YOU, DAREDEVIL.
AFTER THE WAY YOU TREATED YOUR *SAVIOR*--
...SAVIOR...? *YOU?*
YOU MEAN YOU DIDN'T--?

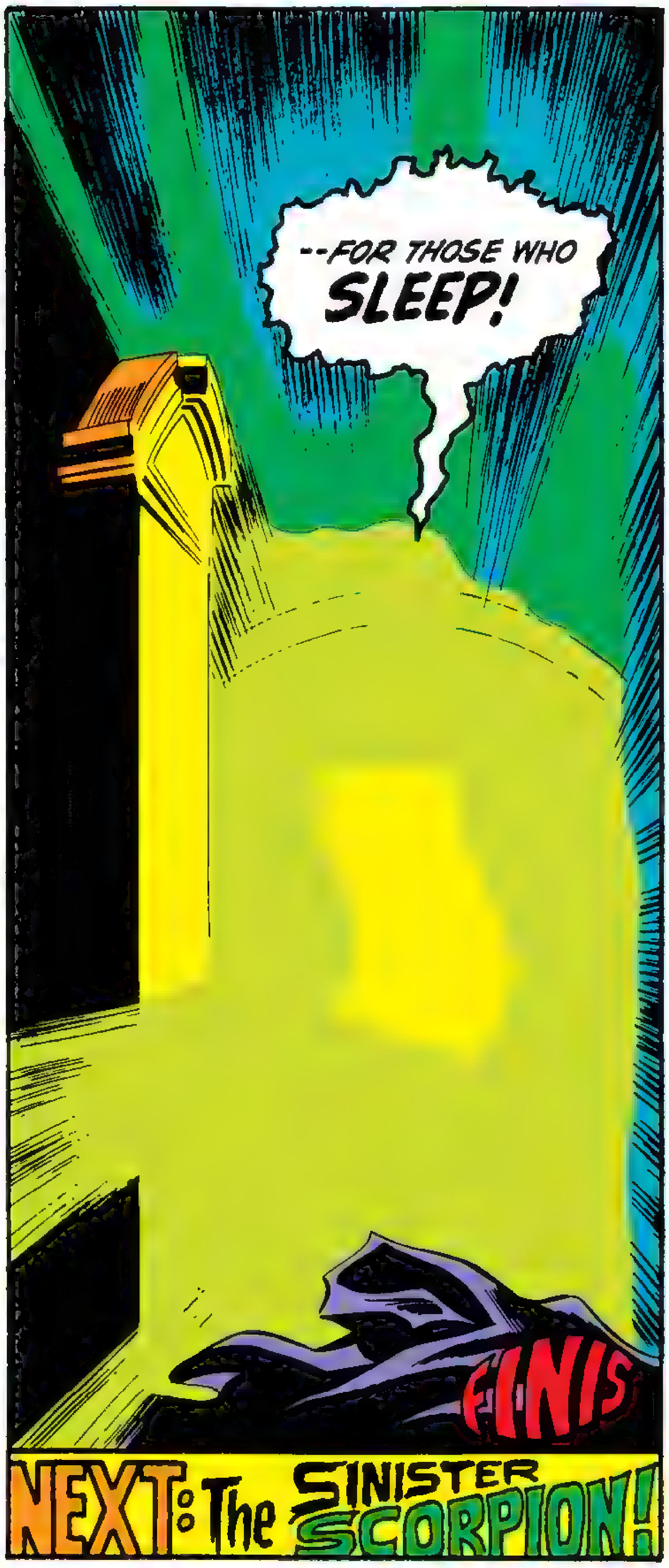

HE'S... *BLACKED OUT.*
PERHAPS... PERHAPS HE *DIDN'T* KNOW--
CAREFUL, NATASHA... DON'T LOOK *TOO* CLOSELY AT HIM...
PLEASE--REMEMBER THAT *CURSE*--
--AND BE *CAREFUL*... NOT TO *CARE.*


WE'VE NO *JUDGEMENTS* TO MAKE-- ONLY *SETS* TO CHANGE...
AND SO--
SO...OWL HAS *FAILED*--BOTH HIMSELF, AND *US.*
IT IS AS I *EXPECTED*-- BUT *STILL*--


ALL WENT SO *WELL*-- UNTIL HIS *WILL* MADE HIM *DISOBEY!*
I FEEL A TOUCH... OF *ANGER.*

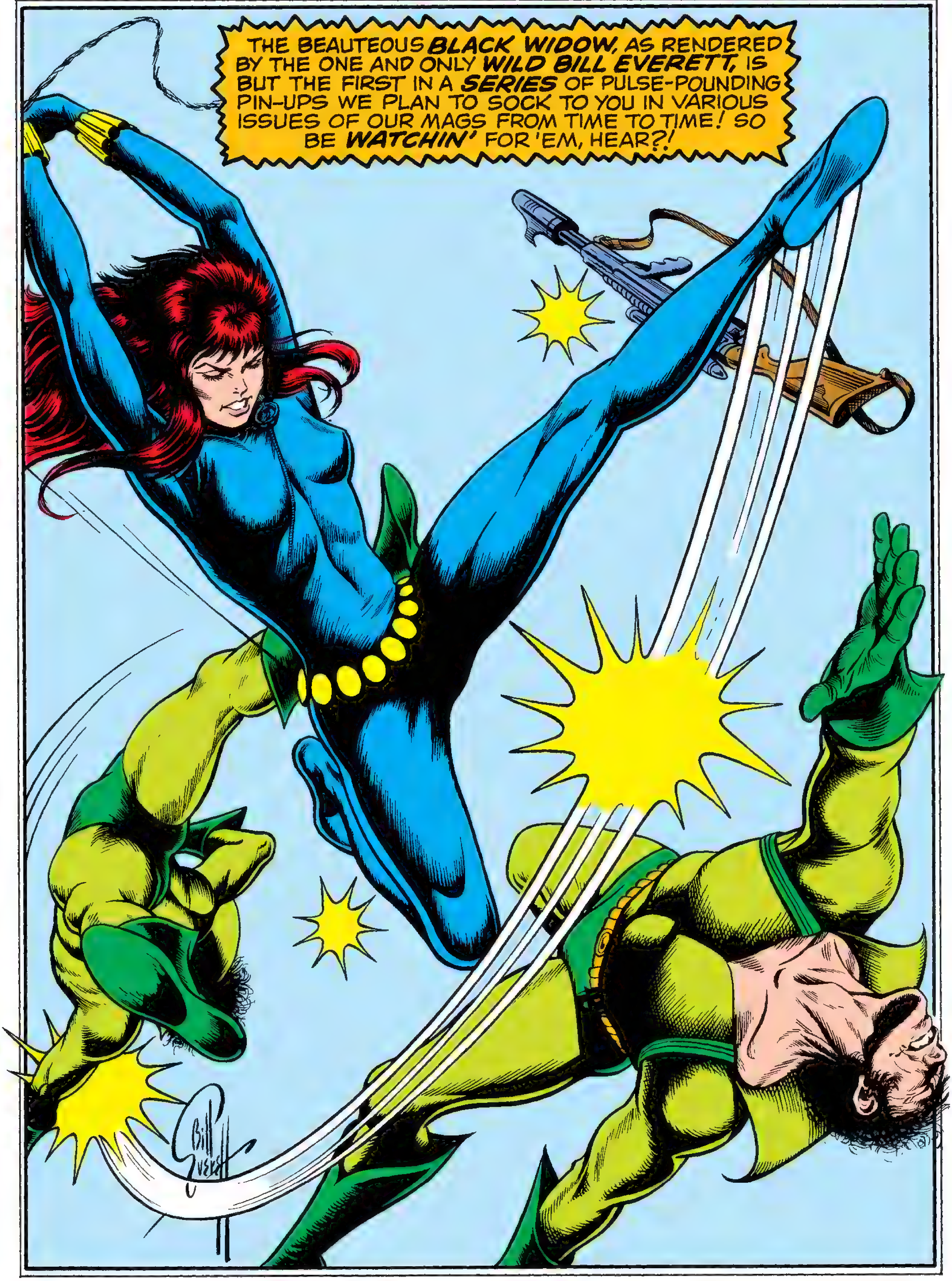

THIS TIME, THEN--THE ONES I CHOOSE-- WILL *HAVE* NO WILL.
THIS TIME-- I CHOOSE THE *SILENT ONES.*
AYE... AT LAST--


--IT IS *TIME*--


--*FOR THOSE WHO* **SLEEP!**
FINIS
NEXT: The SINISTER SCORPION!

YOUR BENEVOLENT BULLPEN PROUDLY PRESENTS:

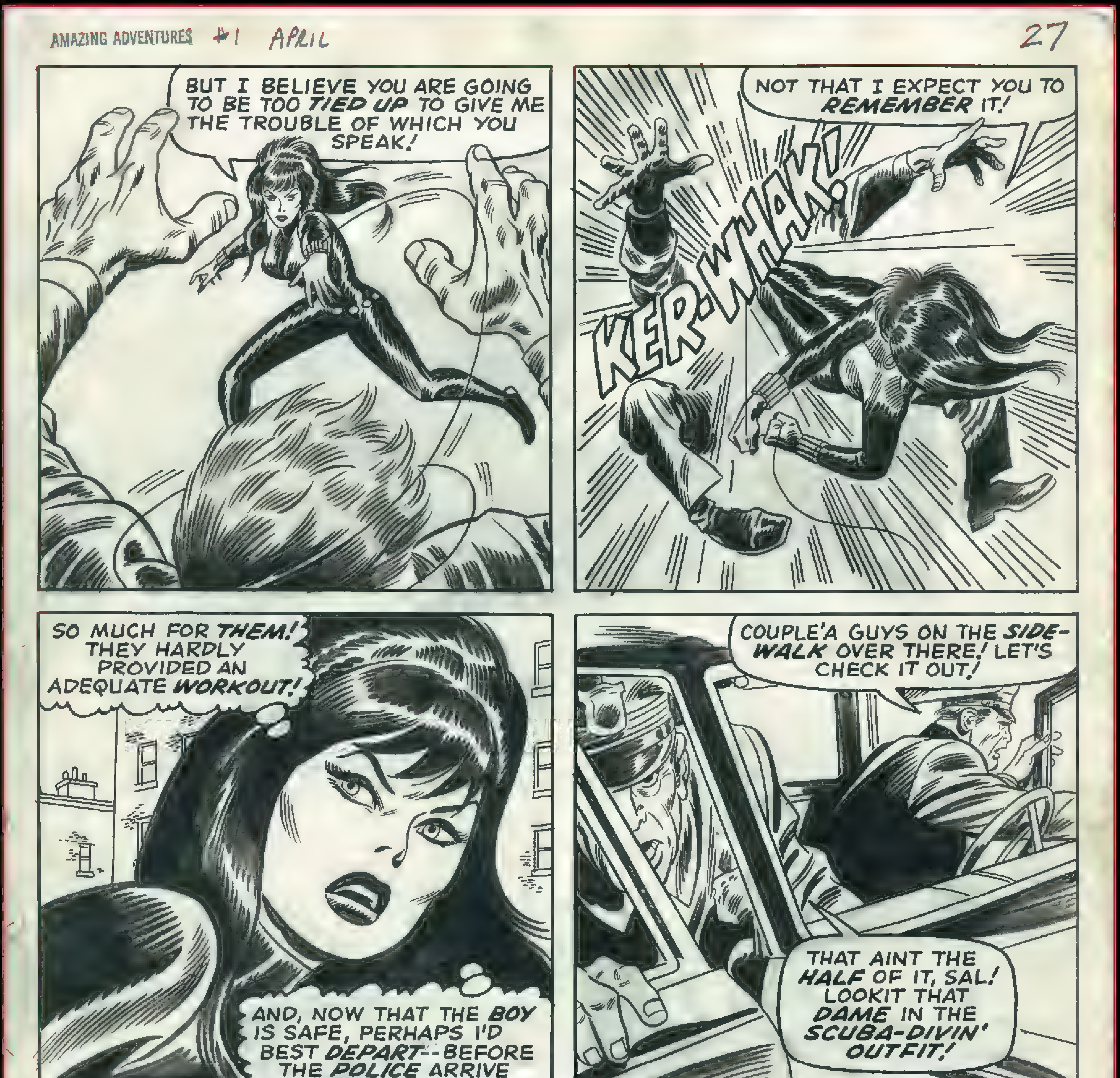
THE MERRY MARVEL GALLERY!


THE BEAUTEOUS **BLACK WIDOW**, AS RENDERED BY THE ONE AND ONLY **WILD BILL EVERETT**, IS BUT THE FIRST IN A **SERIES** OF PULSE-POUNDING PIN-UPS WE PLAN TO SOCK TO YOU IN VARIOUS ISSUES OF OUR MAGS FROM TIME TO TIME! SO BE **WATCHIN'** FOR 'EM, HEAR?!

MIGHTY MARVEL PRESENTS...
A STAN LEE PRODUCTION
WRITTEN BY GARY FRIEDRICH
DRAWN BY JOHN BUSCEMA
INKED BY JOHN VERPOORTEN
LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK
THEN CAME...
the BLACK WIDOW
225 Z

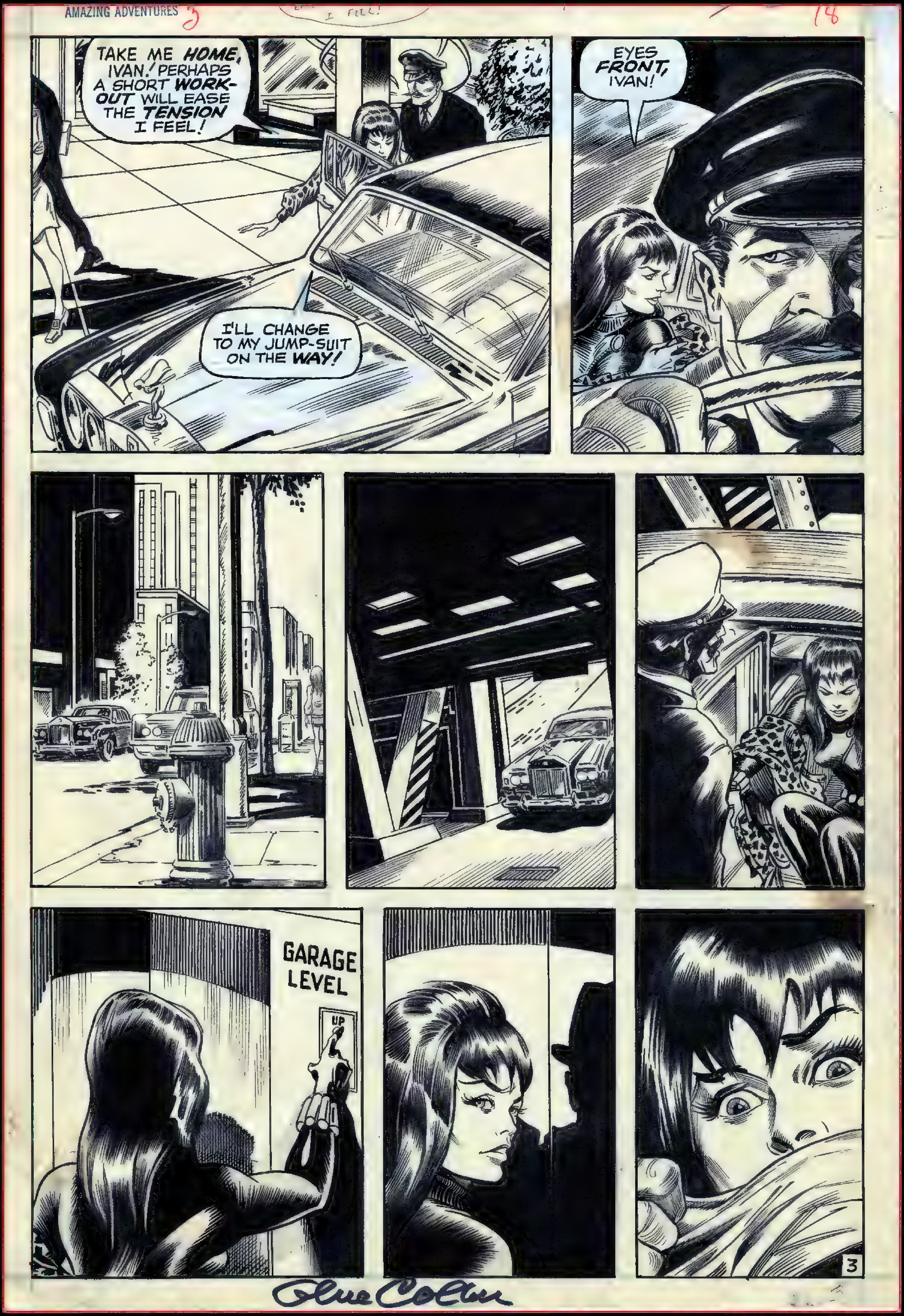
COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #1, PAGE 1 ORIGINAL ART, BY JOHN BUSCEMA & JOHN VERPOORTEN


AMAZING ADVENTURES #1 APRIL
27
BUT I BELIEVE YOU ARE GOING TO BE TOO *TIED UP* TO GIVE ME THE TROUBLE OF WHICH YOU SPEAK!
NOT THAT I EXPECT YOU TO *REMEMBER* IT!
KER-WHAK!
SO MUCH FOR *THEM!* THEY HARDLY PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE *WORKOUT!*
AND, NOW THAT THE *BOY* IS SAFE, PERHAPS I'D BEST *DEPART*--BEFORE THE *POLICE* ARRIVE *WAIT!* HERE THEY COME *NOW!*
COUPLE'A GUYS ON THE *SIDE-WALK* OVER THERE! LET'S CHECK IT OUT!
THAT AINT THE *HALF* OF IT, SAL! LOOKIT THAT *DAME* IN THE *SCUBA-DIVIN' OUTFIT!*
THERE SHE GOES, OFFICER! SHE'S GETTING *AWAY!*
WHO THE DEVIL *IS* SHE?
WHAT'D SHE *DO* TO THESE GUYS?
WHO *KNOWS!* I'M JUST A CUB PHOTOGRAPHER FOR THE *NEW YORK PRESS,* AND ALL I CARE ABOUT'S GETTIN' HER *PICTURE!*
IF THIS SHOT SCOOPS *JAMESON,* MAYBE I CAN GET A *RAISE!*
9.

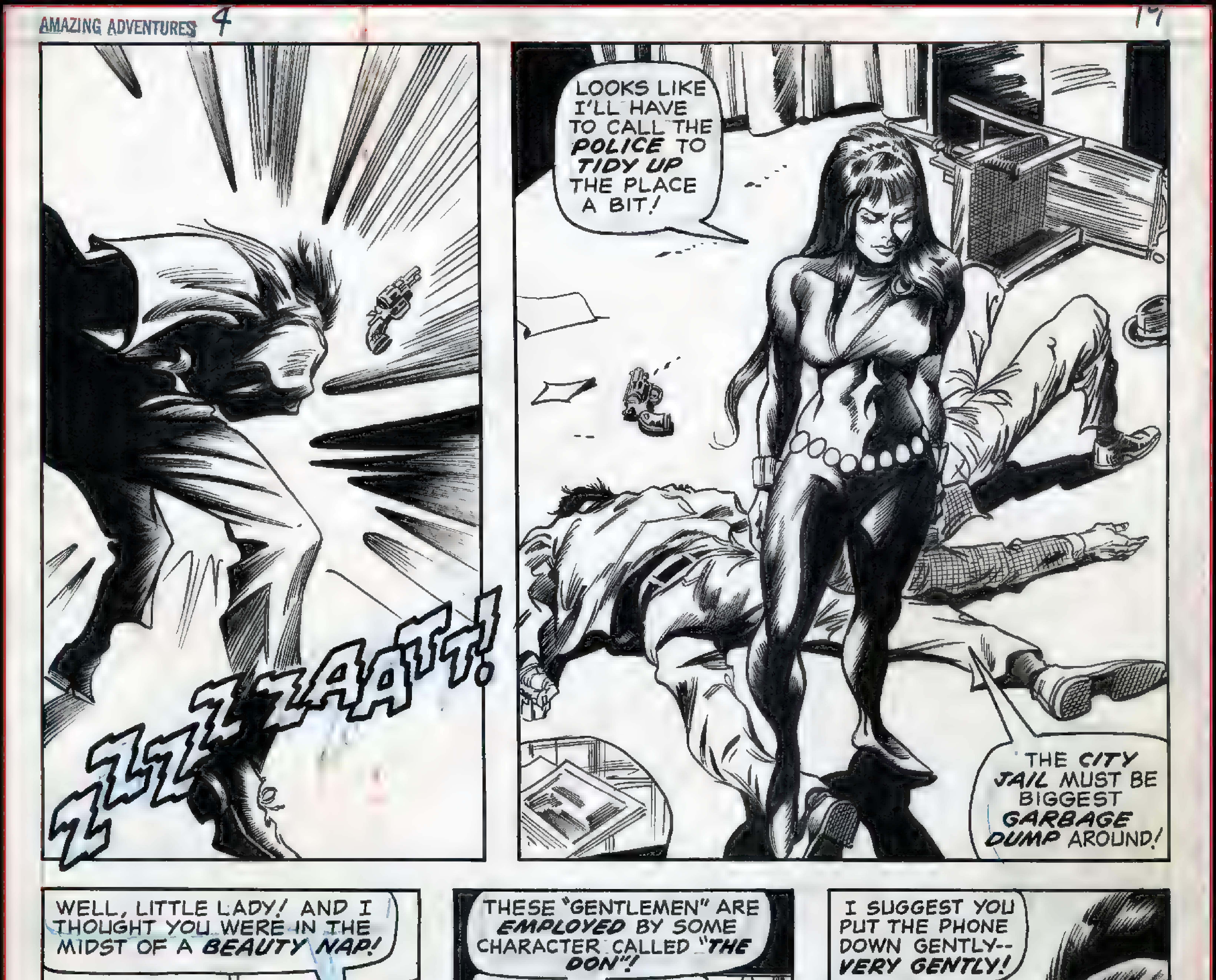
COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #1, PAGE 9 ORIGINAL ART, BY JOHN BUSCEMA & JOHN VERPOORTEN


AMAZING ADVENTURES 3
18
TAKE ME HOME, IVAN! PERHAPS A SHORT WORK-OUT WILL EASE THE TENSION I FEEL!
I'LL CHANGE TO MY JUMP-SUIT ON THE WAY!
EYES FRONT, IVAN!
GARAGE LEVEL
UP
3
Gene Colan

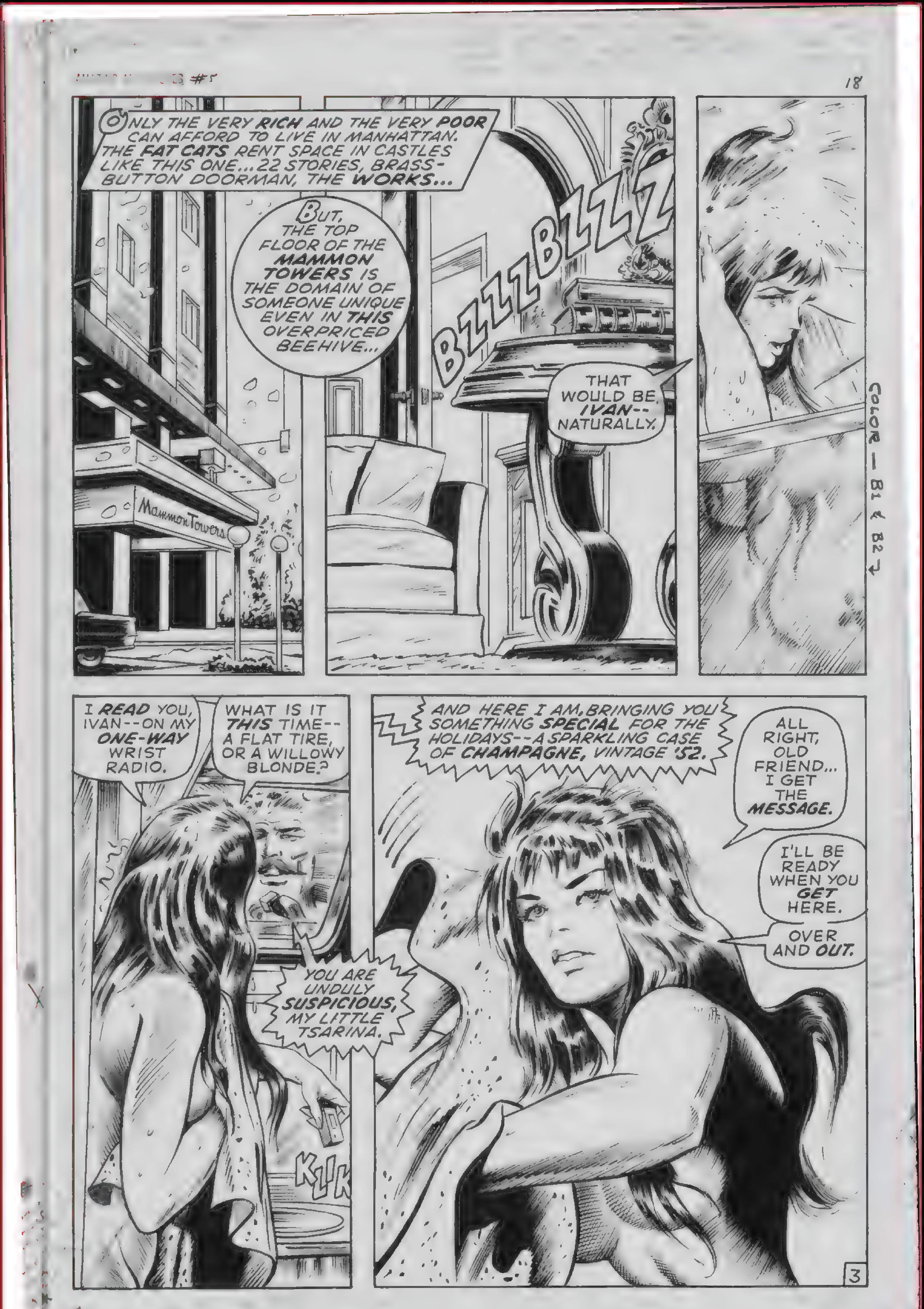
COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #3, PAGE 3 ORIGINAL ART, BY GENE COLAN & BILL EVERETT


AMAZING ADVENTURES 4
14
ZZZZZAATT!
LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO CALL THE *POLICE* TO *TIDY UP* THE PLACE A BIT!
THE *CITY JAIL* MUST BE BIGGEST *GARBAGE DUMP* AROUND!
WELL, LITTLE LADY! AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN THE MIDST OF A *BEAUTY NAP!*
YOUR-- UH-- GUESTS NEGLECTED TO *LOCK* THE FRONT DOOR!
THESE "GENTLEMEN" ARE *EMPLOYED* BY SOME CHARACTER CALLED "*THE DON*"!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT FROM *ME*, BUT I THINK I'LL LET THE *POLICE* FIND THAT OUT!
WELL, MAKE IT *QUICK!* WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU *UPTOWN* BEFORE SCAROLA BECOMES *PUBLIC MARTYR #1!*
I SUGGEST YOU PUT THE PHONE DOWN GENTLY-- *VERY GENTLY!*
WHAT DO YOU CREEPS *WANT* WITH THE *BLACK WIDOW* ANYWAY!
4
Gene Colan
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

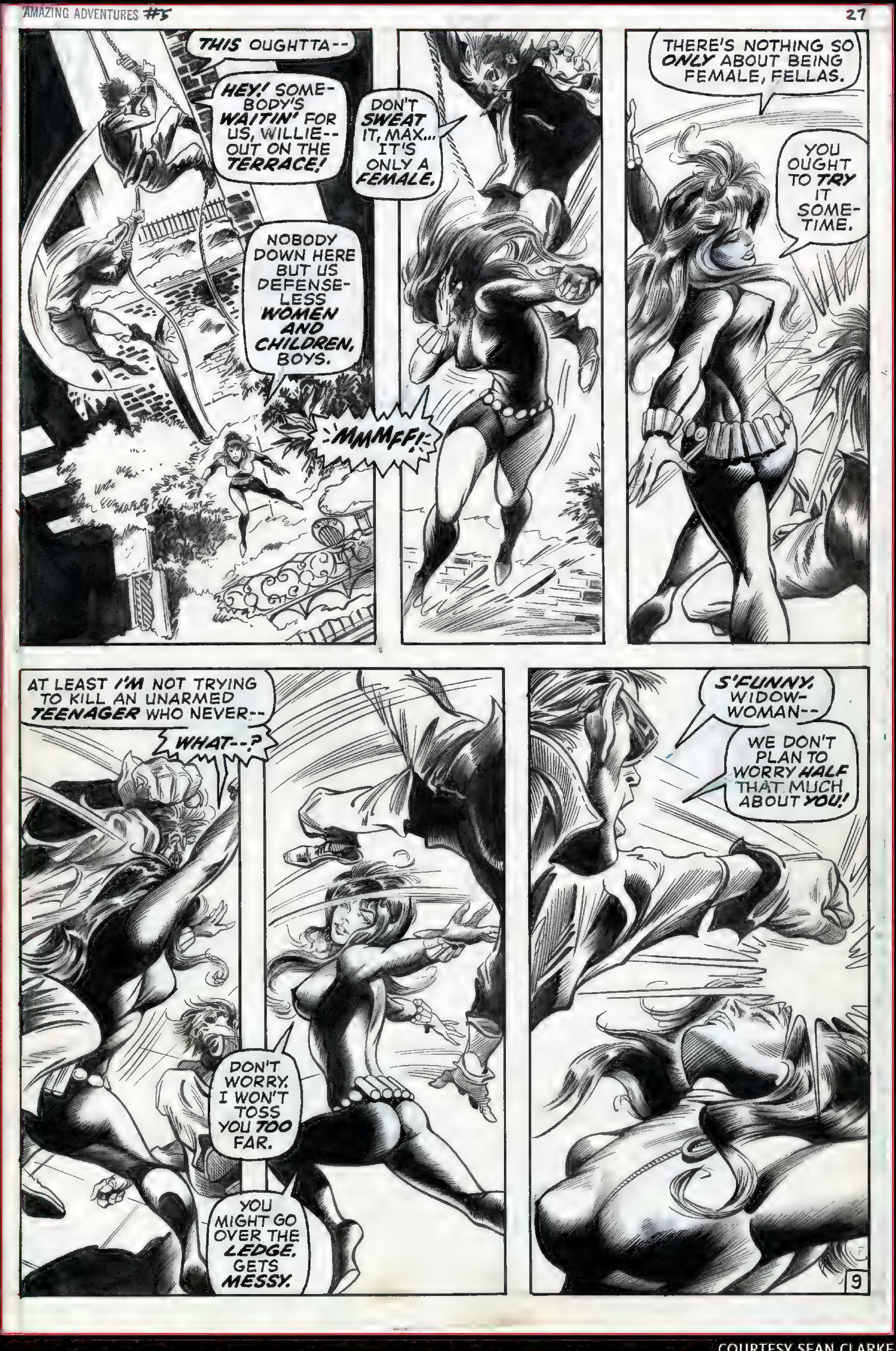
***AMAZING ADVENTURES* #4, PAGE 4 ORIGINAL ART, BY GENE COLAN & BILL EVERETT**


#5
18
ONLY THE VERY RICH AND THE VERY POOR CAN AFFORD TO LIVE IN MANHATTAN. THE FAT CATS RENT SPACE IN CASTLES LIKE THIS ONE...22 STORIES, BRASS-BUTTON DOORMAN, THE WORKS...
BUT, THE TOP FLOOR OF THE MAMMON TOWERS IS THE DOMAIN OF SOMEONE UNIQUE EVEN IN THIS OVERPRICED BEEHIVE...
Mammon Towers
BZZZBZZZ
THAT WOULD BE, IVAN--NATURALLY.
COLOR — B1 & B2
I READ YOU, IVAN--ON MY ONE-WAY WRIST RADIO.
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME--A FLAT TIRE, OR A WILLOWY BLONDE?
YOU ARE UNDULY SUSPICIOUS, MY LITTLE TSARINA.
KLIK
AND HERE I AM, BRINGING YOU SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR THE HOLIDAYS--A SPARKLING CASE OF CHAMPAGNE, VINTAGE '52.
ALL RIGHT, OLD FRIEND... I GET THE MESSAGE.
I'LL BE READY WHEN YOU GET HERE.
OVER AND OUT.
3

SHOT BEFORE FINAL EDITS AND APPROVALS, THESE "RECORD NEGATIVE" PHOTOSTATS FOR *AMAZING ADVENTURES* #5, PAGES 3-4 FEATURE GENE COLAN & BILL EVERETT'S UNREVISED ARTWORK. THE STEAMY SCENE LIKELY HAD TO BE TONED DOWN TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF THE INDUSTRY CENSOR, COMICS CODE AUTHORITY.

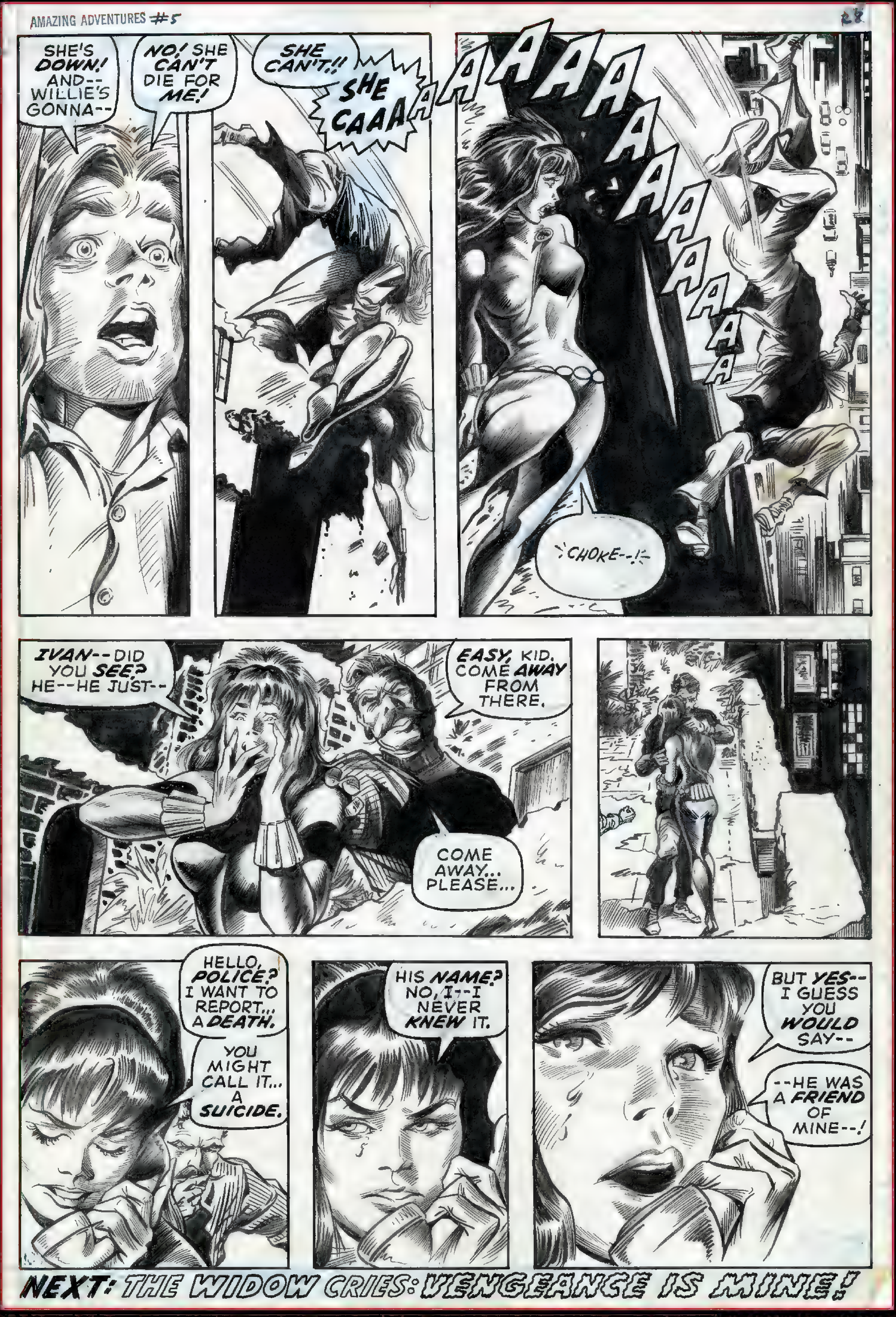
19
A "CASE OF CHAMPAGNE, VINTAGE '52... THAT'S IVAN'S WAY OF SAYING HE'S BRINGING ME A...CLIENT...
...A TEENAGER... MALE...AND IN TROUBLE!
I'D BETTER GET SUITED UP FOR ACTION, JUST IN CASE.
"STILL, I WONDER WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE A TEENAGE BOY COULD GET INTO...ON CHRISTMAS EVE...?"
LOOK, OLD-TIMER... I'VE BEEN A GOOD BOY...HAVEN'T TRIED TO KILL MYSELF FOR THE LAST FEW BLOCKS...
SO HOW ABOUT FILLIN' IN SOME OF THE BLANK SPACES ABOUT THIS BOSS-LADY OF YOURS?
OR DID A COUPLE OF LINES IN LOCAL PAPERS TELL ALL THERE IS TO KNOW?
NO ONE KNOWS ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE BLACK WIDOW, KID--
NO ONE BUT IVAN--
--AND ~~MAYBE~~ NOT EVEN IVAN.
NOW, WHY DON'T YOU JUST COME ALONG QUIETLY?
YOU MEAN I GOT A CHOICE?
WEIRD SCENE! I MEAN, A ROLLS--A RUSSIAN ~~CHAUFFEUR~~ WHO TALKS LIKE A REFUGEE FROM AN OLD BOGART FLICK--
AND NOW, A LOCKED, PRIVATE ELEVATOR--
--GOIN' TO NOWHERE EXCEPT THE 22ND FLOOR!
I'LL CRY TOMORROW.
NOW SHADDUP!
YOU'RE VIOLATIN' MY RIGHTS, TOO. YOU KNOW THAT, DON'TCHA?
4

EDITORIAL NOTES ON PAGE 3, PANEL 4 READ "HAVE TOWEL EXTEND TO HERE AS SHOWN" AND "COULD ART BE EXTENDED SO IT'S TO THE BACK OF HER HIP THAT'S SHOWN." NOTES ON PAGE 4, PANEL 1 STATE, "SHE LOOKS TOO GIRDLED & PINCHED-IN -- NOT SO HOUR-GLASSY!"


AMAZING ADVENTURES #5
27
THIS OUGHTTA--
HEY! SOMEBODY'S WAITIN' FOR US, WILLIE--OUT ON THE TERRACE!
NOBODY DOWN HERE BUT US DEFENSELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN, BOYS.
DON'T SWEAT IT, MAX... IT'S ONLY A FEMALE.
MMMFF!
THERE'S NOTHING SO ONLY ABOUT BEING FEMALE, FELLAS.
YOU OUGHT TO TRY IT SOMETIME.
AT LEAST I'M NOT TRYING TO KILL AN UNARMED TEENAGER WHO NEVER--
WHAT--?
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T TOSS YOU TOO FAR.
YOU MIGHT GO OVER THE LEDGE. GETS MESSY.
S'FUNNY, WIDOW-WOMAN--
WE DON'T PLAN TO WORRY HALF THAT MUCH ABOUT YOU!
9

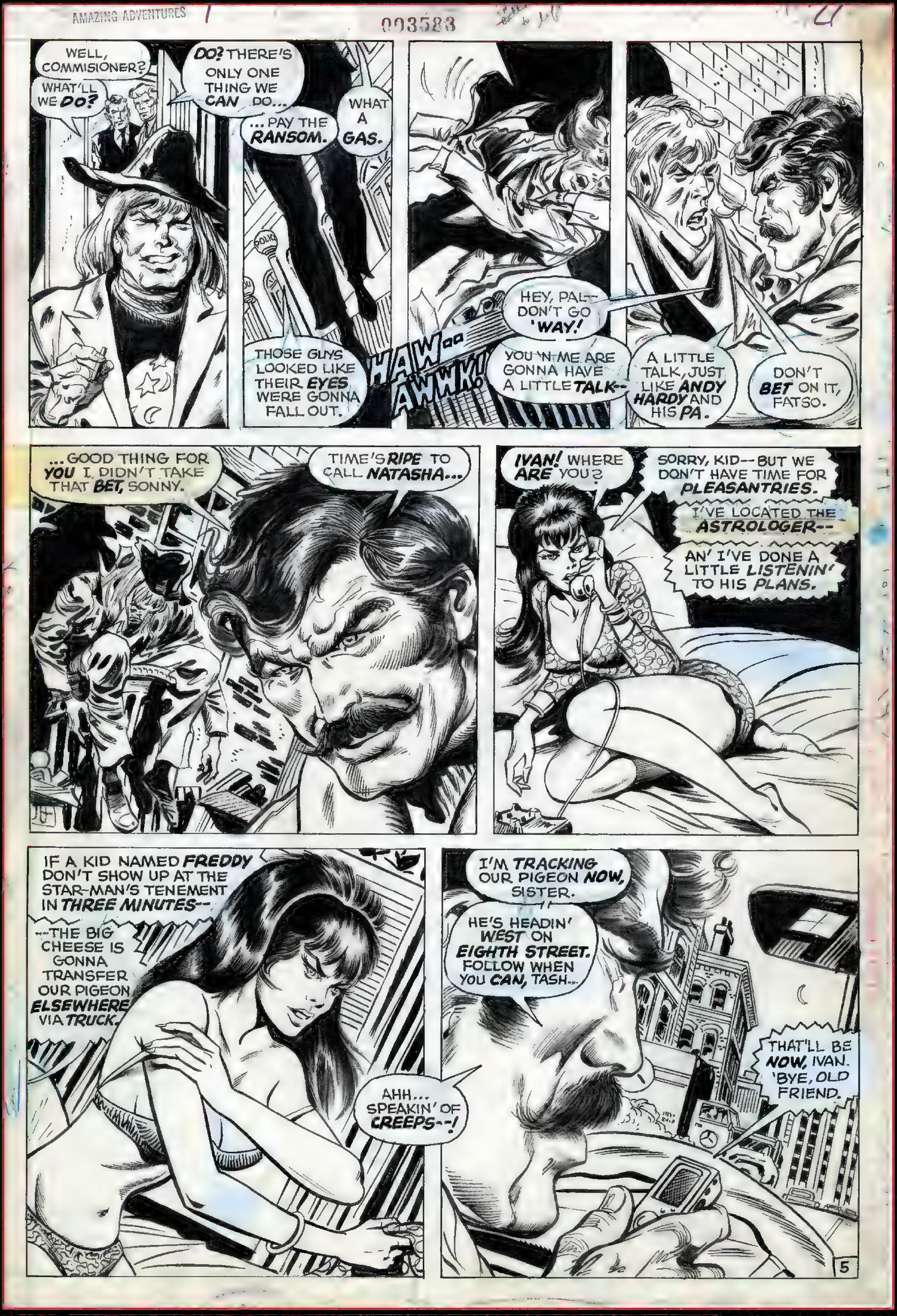
COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #5, PAGE 9 ORIGINAL ART, BY GENE COLAN & BILL EVERETT


AMAZING ADVENTURES #5
28
SHE'S DOWN! AND-- WILLIE'S GONNA--
NO! SHE CAN'T DIE FOR ME!
SHE CAN'T!!
SHE CAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
·CHOKE--!·
IVAN--DID YOU SEE? HE--HE JUST--
EASY, KID. COME AWAY FROM THERE.
COME AWAY... PLEASE...
HELLO, POLICE? I WANT TO REPORT... A DEATH.
YOU MIGHT CALL IT... A SUICIDE.
HIS NAME? NO, I--I NEVER KNEW IT.
BUT YES-- I GUESS YOU WOULD SAY--
--HE WAS A FRIEND OF MINE--!
NEXT: THE WIDOW CRIES: VENGEANCE IS MINE!

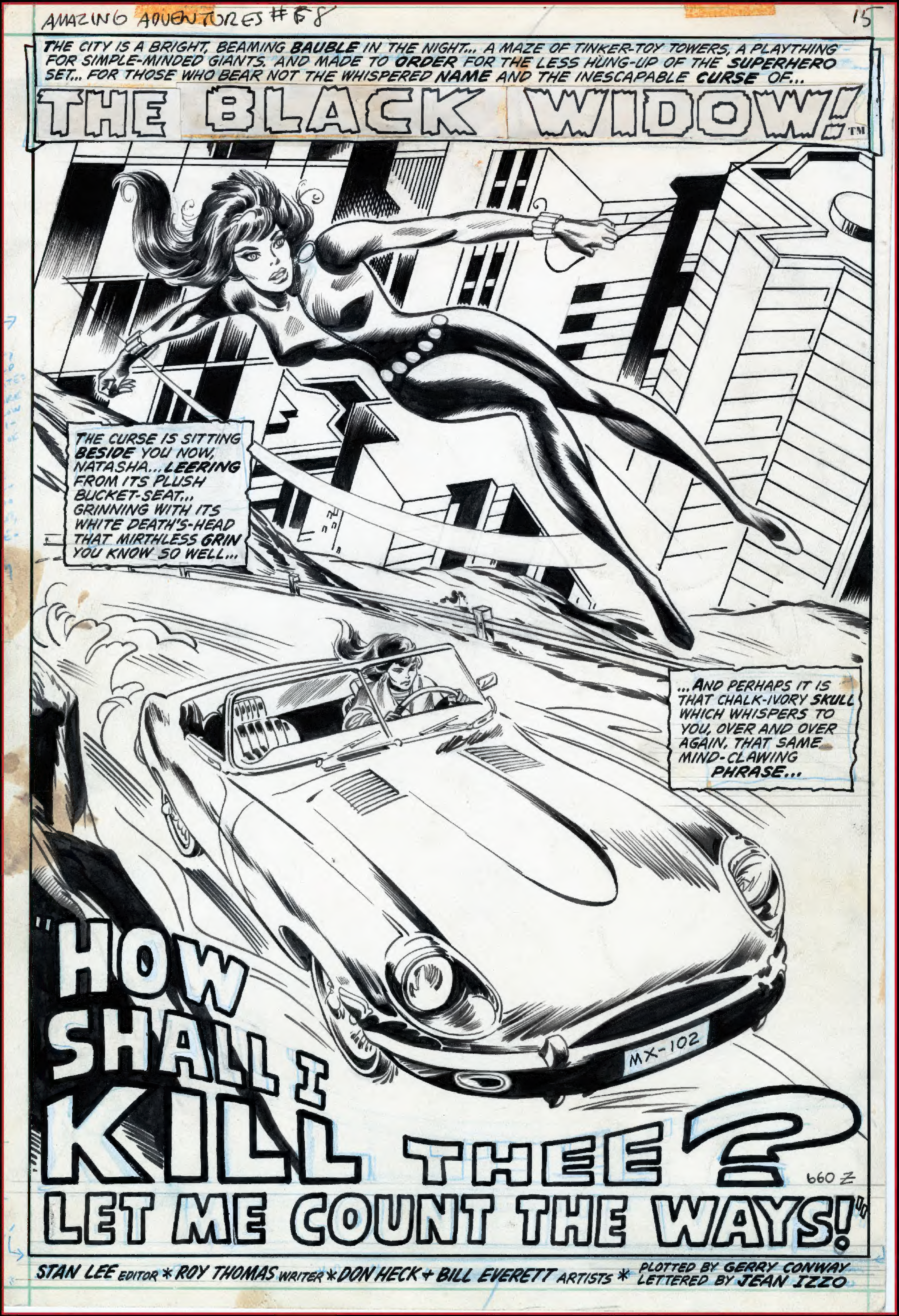
COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #5, PAGE 10 ORIGINAL ART, BY GENE COLAN & BILL EVERETT


AMAZING ADVENTURES 7
003583
WELL, COMMISIONER? WHAT'LL WE DO?
DO? THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO...
...PAY THE RANSOM.
WHAT A GAS.
THOSE GUYS LOOKED LIKE THEIR EYES WERE GONNA FALL OUT.
HAW-- AWWK!
HEY, PAL-- DON'T GO 'WAY!
YOU 'N ME ARE GONNA HAVE A LITTLE TALK--
A LITTLE TALK, JUST LIKE ANDY HARDY AND HIS PA.
DON'T BET ON IT, FATSO.
...GOOD THING FOR YOU I DIDN'T TAKE THAT BET, SONNY.
TIME'S RIPE TO CALL NATASHA...
IVAN! WHERE ARE YOU?
SORRY, KID--BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR PLEASANTRIES.
I'VE LOCATED THE ASTROLOGER--
AN' I'VE DONE A LITTLE LISTENIN' TO HIS PLANS.
IF A KID NAMED FREDDY DON'T SHOW UP AT THE STAR-MAN'S TENEMENT IN THREE MINUTES--
--THE BIG CHEESE IS GONNA TRANSFER OUR PIGEON ELSEWHERE VIA TRUCK.
AHH... SPEAKIN' OF CREEPS--!
I'M TRACKING OUR PIGEON NOW, SISTER.
HE'S HEADIN' WEST ON EIGHTH STREET. FOLLOW WHEN YOU CAN, TASH...
THAT'LL BE NOW, IVAN. 'BYE, OLD FRIEND.
5

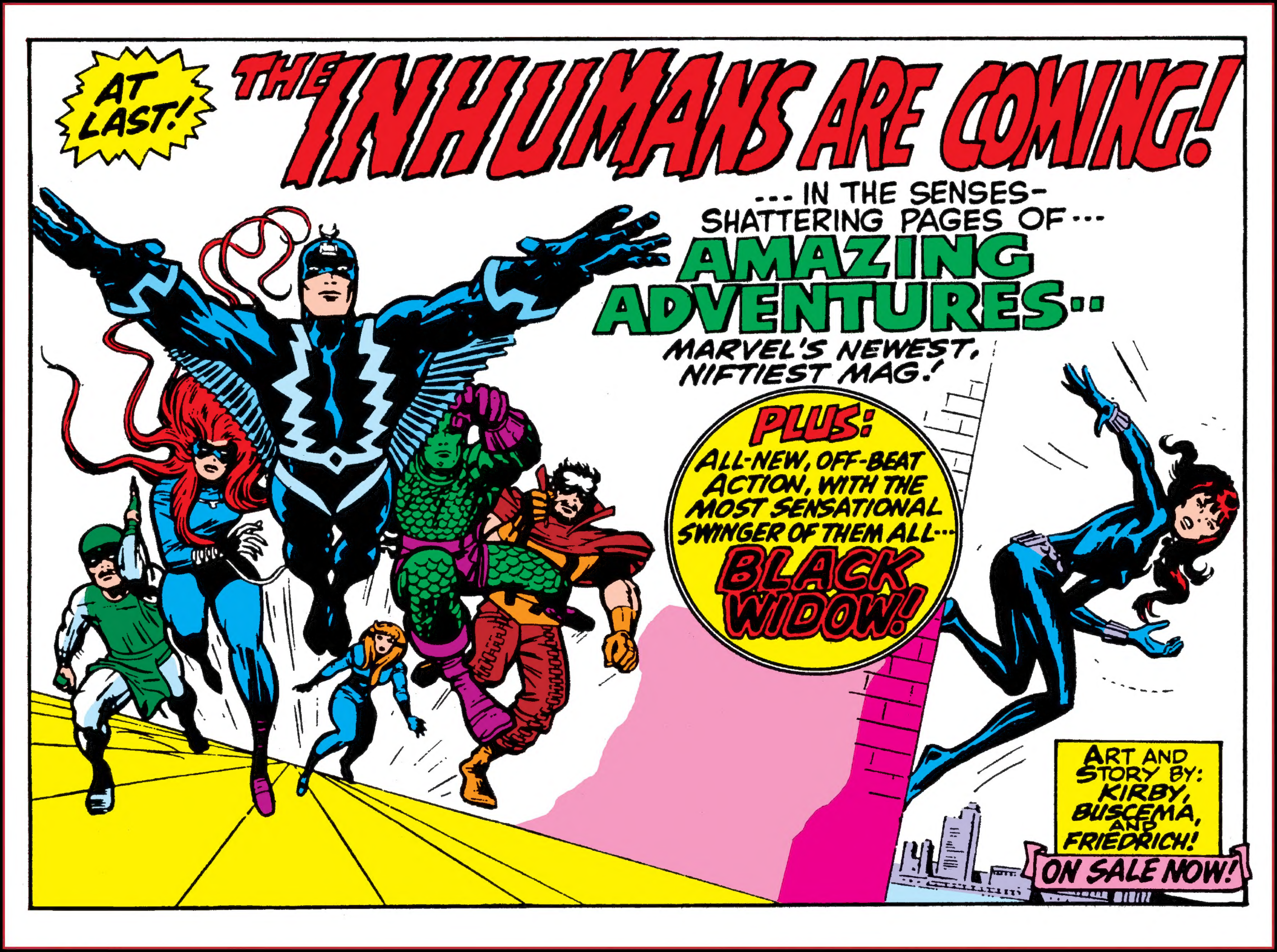
COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #7, PAGE 5 ORIGINAL ART, BY DON HECK & BILL EVERETT


AMAZING ADVENTURES #8
15
THE CITY IS A BRIGHT, BEAMING BAUBLE IN THE NIGHT... A MAZE OF TINKER-TOY TOWERS, A PLAYTHING FOR SIMPLE-MINDED GIANTS, AND MADE TO ORDER FOR THE LESS HUNG-UP OF THE SUPERHERO SET... FOR THOSE WHO BEAR NOT THE WHISPERED NAME AND THE INESCAPABLE CURSE OF...
THE BLACK WIDOW!™
THE CURSE IS SITTING BESIDE YOU NOW, NATASHA... LEERING FROM ITS PLUSH BUCKET-SEAT... GRINNING WITH ITS WHITE DEATH'S-HEAD THAT MIRTHLESS GRIN YOU KNOW SO WELL...
...AND PERHAPS IT IS THAT CHALK-IVORY SKULL WHICH WHISPERS TO YOU, OVER AND OVER AGAIN, THAT SAME MIND-CLAWING PHRASE...
MX-102
"HOW SHALL I KILL THEE? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS!"
660 Z
STAN LEE EDITOR * ROY THOMAS WRITER * DON HECK + BILL EVERETT ARTISTS * PLOTTED BY GERRY CONWAY LETTERED BY JEAN IZZO

COURTESY SEAN CLARKE

AMAZING ADVENTURES #8, PAGE 1 ORIGINAL ART, BY DON HECK & BILL EVERETT


AT LAST!
THE INHUMANS ARE COMING!
... IN THE SENSES-SHATTERING PAGES OF ...
AMAZING ADVENTURES..
MARVEL'S NEWEST, NIFTIEST MAG!
PLUS: ALL-NEW, OFF-BEAT ACTION, WITH THE MOST SENSATIONAL SWINGER OF THEM ALL... BLACK WIDOW!
ART AND STORY BY: KIRBY, BUSCEMA, AND FRIEDRICH!
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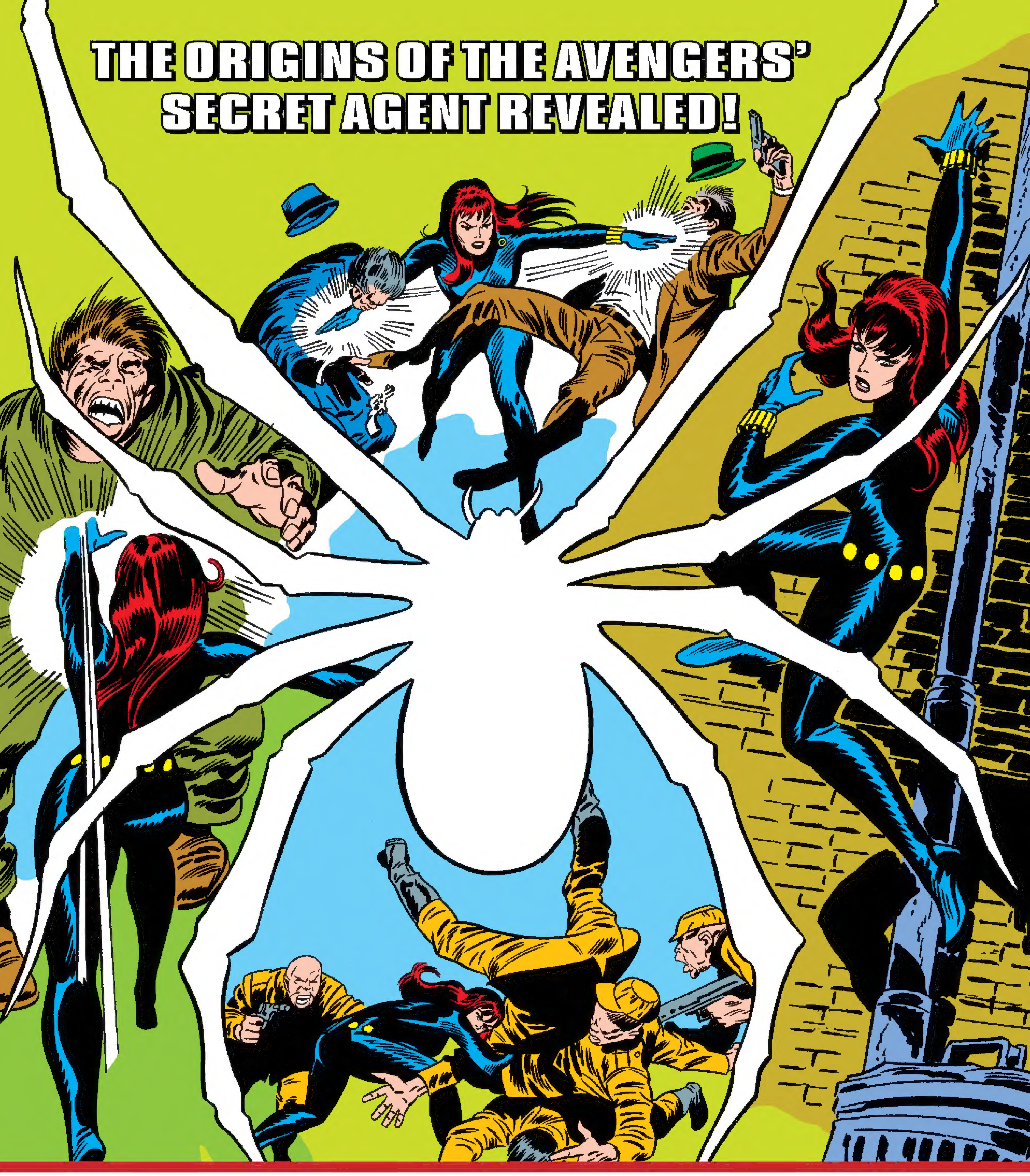

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